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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
I. RIGHT MENTAL METHOD.	I
II. AMERICA'S DEBT	32
III. THE AMERICAN OPPORTUNITY	56
IV. THE DIVINE IMMANENCE.	86
V. LAW OF THE DIVINE IMMANENCE	109
VI. A DIVINE PERSON	139
VII. AN AMERICAN ATONEMENT	166
VIII. FALSE AND TRUE PRAYING.	191
IX. STRIFE AND SYMMETRY	220
X. A CONSCIENCE FOR TRUTH	244
XI. CONSTANCY TO AN IDEAL	270
XII. THE AMERICAN SOLDIER.	297

AMERICAN RELIGION.

I.

RIGHT MENTAL METHOD.

SOME mental method must exist to control all the applications of Thought in morals and religion. Of course it is trite to say there must be method everywhere. The Oneida Community ran to waste year after year for want of method in its trade and farming, till a French Canadian came there with a mouse-trap of his invention, and caught prosperity. No trap had ever before so nicely corresponded to the cunning of surplus mice. Method is simply an adaptation to the facts. The sculptor discovers what form of tool will hollow a knee-joint, and he saves time for the face. Philosophers and theologians grow stiff in that joint because they refuse to walk in Nature's way. But the great discoveries of Newton and Kepler had nothing mysterious: they were the gestures of men without preconceptions to methodize, whose ways were so near to Nature that they kept the rare brains susceptible to organic laws; so that their genius was their health.

Method rules the distinction between the literary man and the Bohemian, the scholar and the charlatan.

Mere mental and emotional ability works extravagantly, and falls poor at last, perhaps quite suddenly, unless it has the grace to ally itself with certain old necessities of the universe, either as horse in the traces or driver upon the seat. A great deal of American literary and religious striving runs to sentimentalism because the fatigue of discovering the order of the world is found to be too great.

There can be but one mental method, and that is when intelligence discerns and repeats the way in which natural and spiritual things develop. The idea of unity presides over this: an idea which starts in our own personal oneness; the organic integrity that precedes good and bad, right and wrong, all dualism and dispute. The first assurance which this idea gives the mind, or struggles, amid the horde of theologies and preconceptions to give it, is, that all things have the consistency of being developed in one way. Has this idea come into our consciousness as a deduction from a long series of experimental observations, a century-plant composted by all the soils, and tended by all the races of mankind, or is it the original form of the mind that is kept constantly stirring by observation, lest an overdose of mythologizing should prove fatal? If we say it is only a late result of a long series of observations, carried on by different races of men, and transmitted in imperfect stages of deduction to the present, we do not account for the first step which the mind made towards the idea. However bunglingly made, the impulse to make it must have previously resided in the mind. Some character of the mental constitution must have decided that relation

towards the observation of facts which we perceive to result in a law of unity. If, on the other hand, we say that it was at the earliest period innate in the mind — meaning that mind could not be born without having it expressed, not merely implied, in its structure — we cannot account for observation, nor explain the imperfect attempts it made on the road to the idea. If an idea be innate, it must preside over the whole process of experimental knowledge, prevent early misunderstandings, and impress every stage of observation with its own sense of the true method of the universe. It is plain, then, that two things run parallel with each other, and are capable of touching for mutual interaction : the universe and the mental structure ; and the observing faculty moves in the company of an explaining faculty, which is a developing tendency, and not an innate idea. There was a time when all facts lay latent in the universe, and all co-ordinating instincts lay latent in the mind. But the first material fact found a mental comrade, whose hand groped after it, and both began to feel their way together towards a principle of unity.

The idea of unity was once an inchoate form, laid helplessly upon the breast of the divine order : a capacity to imbibe, assimilate, reduce to function and organ, the teeming facts ; not innate, but inchoate, and not even now hardened into manhood nor proceeding through all persons ; but it has preserved, amid its fumbling and complaining, the power to drain the great Order into all its veins. It came from beneath the bosom at which it suckles, and the circuit is complete.

What is meant by saying that all things have the consistency of being developed in one way? It means that all effects flow out of all causes in unbroken continuity of direction, thought and purpose; that the forethought of the Creative Mind, present at every point of space in every moment of time, brings succession of all phenomena without a break, without a spasm, without an after-thought or an interpolation; that the divine ability eternally possessed this intention of gradualism and unbroken uniformity, both in matter and mind; that the words *genera*, *species*, *strata*, *epochs*, *transitions*, *races*, and *systems*, only express our mental recognition of characters, but do not confirm the existence of breaks, faults, renewals or interpositions; that in all cases the agencies which are found to be uniformly at work are those which preclude the idea of exceptional ones; and that the idea of exceptional forces or periods belongs to a state of mind whose unity is not thoroughly set free. According as a man knows himself he knows the nature of the Cosmos. The more he knows himself the more obedient he becomes to a consciousness that the famous axiom of Hippocrates, “Ὁ Νόμος πάντα κρατύνει,” *Law governs all things*, must become the basis of his thought.

There have been developing periods of intelligence, during which the feeling of Law is feebler than the idea of caprice. All the natural elements favor at first a sentiment that phenomena occur by spasms, irruptions, determinations of personal agency. Persons themselves work in this intermittent way, and they impute it to Nature for ages, during which mythology is born. All mythologies are merely the emphasis

which the want of intelligence puts upon facts and appearances: they are lifted and quiver in a mirage of heated fancy. But the crude intelligence has nothing else to start from; and it begins in this way to develop itself with a simple and uninstructed perception that there are some very wonderful elements of nature and mind.

Now, although at first all method was mythological, yet the most scientific period of a race or of the world may still have its mythology, because all minds do not develop abreast of each other into the form of unity. The most religious people may be the most infested with the sentiment that God sometimes inserts parentheses into creation, because religion, in its limited sense, is only a tendency to acknowledge that there must be something invisible to man and superior to his knowledge. Religion in its widest sense is the same as mental unity, and it invests the invisible with its own overpowering consciousness that the invisible is a continuity of Law.

Mythology blossoms and exhales. Its pungent aroma is what men call the Supernatural. With a root in the ground, and leaves that imbibe the simple elements of nature, the moment it comes to perfume men pronounce it the true Invisible. But it is still only matter in a tenuous form.

How shall we distinguish? We cannot call every thing Nature, or every thing Supernature. In the former we do not recognize the making of Nature: in the latter we lose the order of the things that are made. There must always be the Natural because there is always the Supernatural. But our own men-

tal form of unity reveals to us the nature of the Supernatural, whether we believe that this mental form is the net result of all human experience, or that it is a primitive constituent of mind. There can be no quarrel here, nor can there be any obscurity in defining the Supernatural, since the idea of unity which is actual at the end of one process is latent at the beginning of the other. What is chiefly important to note is that when Nature is best understood—and that is when Mind is most perfectly developed—the Supernatural appears as the ground and efficient cause of uniformity, gradual successiveness, perpetual invariability; and irruptions from the invisible are crowded out by the sustenance of Law.

This has a reflex effect upon the past. Our growing conviction that Law sustains every thing, and holds a lineal, undislocated course through all provinces, interprets the past, and, in doing so, eliminates every trace of its mythologies. Nothing is left of mankind's views upon the Supernatural, unless the idea of natural sequence has been mixed up with them. Nothing is left, except a religious sense that there is something invisible. But one of the most important branches of Comparative Religion is that which we may call Essential Mythology, or the real, natural, moral, and spiritual ideas, which, in their struggle towards the light of unity, figured in the myths and legends of the past. The object of Essential Mythology is to show how logically the Divine assumed these phases in the human mind; this relative incompleteness, these tentative efforts, like the succession of animals, from things that creep to things that fly; this congruity and command-

ing forethought, always sufficient to itself, that takes the shortest line between two points, and never breaks it when expected by ignorance, or desired by passion, or pretended by marvellousness. A true science of mythology will pronounce marvellousness the forlorn resort of a mind not yet equipped with unity. When Hippocrates said that there was no divine disease,* he gave the first distinct contribution towards the scientific theory of development, which shows saucer-eyed fancy that the naturalness of every thing is its divinity, and that the invisible never plays tricks with its own eternal sequence, no matter what may be the stake, life or death, or the spiritual health of human souls. Any thing that is truly desirable is already profoundly supernatural, because it flows out of its own essence, or springs from its own seed.

The supernaturalists, who believe in miracles and the exceptional nature of Christ, cling to that theory of development which asserts a special intervention of the Creator at the commencement of fresh forms of animal life in those epochs known to Geology. This theory does not despise a logical order, but finds it in the thought upon which these forms are strung, and not in the gradual derivation of them by any principle of selection, or primitive tendency, or struggle for existence, from the forms just preceding. The supernaturalists prefer the theory of the intervention-

* This Greek superstition, which Hippocrates first discredited, was that the different kinds of insanity represented possession by different deities. Something in the style of the insane person was analogous to the characteristic of the god, and consequently was referred to him as its source.

ists to that of the gradualists, not so much because the latter would derive man from some chimpanzee, as because the former break up creation into successive epochs, with a supernatural irruption at the head of each. This gives a color to their theology of intervention; and Christ appears, not as a gradual blossom on the stem of human nature, but a new creation, and the first member of a new series. Then it is not difficult to suppose that the miracles came in with the miraculous conception of the new man. If the first man was built afresh and not slowly evolved from any thing, did such supernatural events cease then, or have there been subsequent incursions from a higher sphere, to add new forms of spiritual life to human society?

Now the theory of intervention, which theology is lately disposed to press into its service, cannot be applied to the mental and spiritual growth of mankind. It may or may not be true through all the geological eras, and Darwinism may be shown to be a scheme without a constituency, by the facts serving more and more the theory of a sequence of thought with spasms*

* Mr. Huxley, who is a gradualist, does not think it is essential to deny that nature sometimes passes, by a leap, to her fresh varieties, since the leap itself marks only the method of the force that gathers to it, and not a divine impromptu, or thrusting in. He says: "We have always thought that Mr. Darwin has unnecessarily hampered himself by adhering so strictly to his favorite '*Natura non facit saltum*.' We greatly suspect that she does make considerable jumps in the way of variation, now and then, and that these saltations give rise to some of the gaps which appear to exist in the series of known forms."

in the application. But this is beyond our province : we confine ourselves to seeing that, since the creation of man, Comparative Religion does not furnish one fact to justify the idea of mental development by special intervention. Every race shows gradualism in all the provinces of its intelligence, a passage of embryotic thought through all its phases, without a single break or interpolation for which natural causes are not sufficient to account. The Divinity within the natural causes has assumed gradualism for its method. Every kind of truth has spread by the gradual contact of colonization, emigration, or conquest, from one race to another. Upon every meridian the same embryotic ideas of morals and religion are found, which develop with variations due to local influences alone. All religious souls and leaders have been substantially alike in the raw material of their thought. In East and West, in India, Judea and Greece, all of the sages and prophets have shared each others' essentials : beneath the hue of all their cheeks the composition of the blushing blood has been identical. The inchoate mind of the race has brought a correspondence to life and nature, and kept it everywhere and transmitted it. So that intervention, if it ever was the preadamitic plan, has been since changed to immanence : the even, perpetual, unbroken, unhasting, unresting Presence. Comparative Mythology and Religion find no supernatural distinction between the order and texture of the ideas of all the great teachers. Confucius develops towards disinterested morality and monotheism, in other words, towards mental unity ; and so do Zoroaster, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Christ. The ethnological

distinctions do not break the type, nor clamor for the supernatural. We find inequalities of growth, a surplus of one thought here, of another there, a variety of combinations; but no point where there is an interpolation of an impulse or principle which the general soul might not have always been credited with in various embryotic stages. We find amplification, and the correction that is the result of an increase of intelligence, differences in degree but not in kind: neither in a man, nor in a race, nor an epoch, can you find a break in the linear development, and in the transmissibility, by the total of births on the planet, of all the essential substances of morals and religion. Shakespeare and Beethoven are rooted in the general imagination which they overshadow, and upon which they shower blossom and fruit. So do Socrates and Christ confirm the logic of the inchoate mind.

The history of thought or of religion is that of a great *crescendo* movement, that takes up the feebler chords and pronounces them more strongly as it proceeds, drops out the partial chords or overcomes them by the outbursting unity, and accentuates the great theme by developing and not by thrusting in. The composer has his whole orchestra upon the spot; he neither invents nor interpolates an instrument, but wakes them to all combinations. If he gives a few bars rest to the reeds or the brass, the motive of the piece proceeds, and is just as immanent in a pause as in a climax. In the gradual growth of thought, we find that the first faint tendency to account for all things in some way, by connecting them with a mythical personage, or with moisture, with fire, with num-

bers, with a First Cause, has been the self-sufficing seed of the rational method of modern science. The anticipations of the foremost minds have been early blossoms from it; lucky divinings and intuitions were not intruded but evolved. The divine immanence has not been impatient at working in this way. Pythagoras differs from Thales by his position in time and history, and his superiority is that of subsequence. In the province of Religion, we detect a faint sense of the divine Fatherhood, long before Judea becomes fragrant with filial confidence. When we are astonished in spring to see a western prairie one rolling fire of flowers, we do not think of an irruption but of an evolution. And when the pine forest burns down, and oaks succeed, we are reminded of the natural latency of the germs in all the successions of mankind. The only supernatural condition is that of perpetual indwelling when Christ comes after Socrates.

No doubt there are periods in human history when the divine proceeding lifts itself in great enthusiasm, and some man or movement, collecting it into memorable expression, gives it a name that survives, to mark the highest point of thought or morals. The supernaturalist claims that such periods have something exceptional in them. I have heard them called nodes, and compared to the swelling of the smooth cane-plant into the joints that support its whole development; but we must not forget that the joints are only gatherings of the elements already in the stem: the silex is not different, the carbon is the same. No intrusion has brought into the composition of the joint a quality which the stem is not competent to furnish.

Or we may compare these moments of the creative power to the high tides that wet all the coast-lines and leave behind, as they ebb, the sea-wrack to delineate the extreme they reached. Men visit the fresh heaps to collect tokens of the distance whence the wave arrived. But we must be careful to explain that the tide which rises and then ebbs wets every square inch of its movement with identical elements: its highest point is not reached by means of the intrusion of a new constituent, and the force that lifts it is also at every point the same. The natural advantages of the inchoate mind of mankind have simply been expanded, but they have not been altered by the insertion of any elements; so that you cannot expect such periods to be illustrated by any modification of natural laws: the functions of life and death remain untampered with; no more men are raised from the dead than before; no preternatural signs can emphasize what is intrinsically emphatic, or lend it any recommendation. The general mind, through which the tide came sweeping, will sooner or later recognize itself with wonder and gratitude, and find that not a law of nature has been meddled with. Stories will cluster around remarkable men and moments, as they do around remarkable features of a landscape. The savage will have his tradition about some natural gathering of forces in geological displacements; in the growth and endurance of mighty trees; in the encroachment of the ocean upon old districts that were peopled; in the benefits that ancestors derived from the sagacity of some stranger who represented their own qualities enlarged. When he is gone they

celebrate the high tide to which they came in him. This is only because the scientific method was not yet awake to refer phenomena of matter or mind to their own invariable constituents. The savage constructs a story as huge and nebulous as the impression which the eclipse or the subterranean shudder makes upon his imagination. A great man is a signal for an unmethodical generation to have an attack of mythology. It falls to *marvelling* where the man of science, who explores all structures with the tool of mental unity, is content to wonder and adore. We must be careful not to infer from the past effects of marvellousness the possibility of miracle. And we need not import into the period that excites the marvel, any more than into the joint of the cane-plant, a quality that did not build the average from which the period rose.

When the great men appear, perhaps upon some lowly stock, to spread a sudden blossom whose report fills all the world, and liberates a fragrance that is not exclusive but welcome and suitable to all mankind, at first we marvel, and the disposition is to ask, "Who can trace these miraculous conceptions?" But we do not wish to trace a Shakspeare farther than to discover that the divine climax of his imagination was slowly gathered out of human nature. If we approach the fact without prejudice, the method of nature will convince us that when God came to a high-tide in him, He came with the humanity furnished by a hundred ancestors, through all of whom He had been present, building and modifying brain-cells and dispositions in the ordinary way of inheritance, till, when He Shak-

spearized, it was not with incursion of fresh elements that were not previously in the poet's line. The patience of Nature selected that brain at length to condense her pathos and her laughter like a dew: but the common air and light hung upon its myriad points those lucid drops that sparkle as long as the generations which provide those elements can notice them.

Such moments that receive a great man's name only emphasize God's ordinary meanings, all of which receive their turn in religion, poetry and art; and mankind climbs with these to clearer outlooks over their natural horizon. But, in the emphasis received by such a moment, what is there to disturb the order of nature? Things that lie in a different province, — such as the specific gravity of water, the condition of a dead body, the normal production of the vine, the laws of human embryology, the blossoming of a fig-tree, — cannot become modified, or put forth exceptional phenomena. As soon, and with as much reason, might the moments when Hamlet was composed have received superfluous attesting by quickened fermentation of all the beer in Stratford.

What place is there, then, in history, for any thing more supernatural than this incessant Presence? Surely one would think that it would suffice the craving of the most inveterate thaumaturgist. Indeed, it is a wonder that there is any thing at all, or that there ever was any thing, including God himself! The vast fact feeds the imagination till it is too cloyed for the confectionery of miracles. Sometimes it seems inexplicable that there was never nothing at all. "But why then," urges the supernaturalist, "after being obliged to put

at the beginning of your series a miracle, namely, the creation of something, whether out of fulness or of nothingness, should you shrink from repetitions of the first divine act that we can conceive? It was a first supernatural step: why may there not have been subsequent steps, making the same gesture of incursion? You strain at a gnat and swallow a camel." The universe proffers its own reply to this by furnishing us with the right mental method. The first step was no more supernatural than the God who stepped; no more nor less. The gradualism of all subsequent creation refers us back to gradualism in the remotest original purpose of the divine mind. We cannot use the word "beginning," or say that there was ever such a thing or movement. The first term in the series of all phenomena was essential Eternity: there must then have been eternally a proceeding forth out of Eternity. There must eternally have been the simple forthcoming, of which all things are modes, gradually developed, but never aside from the continuous company of the divine developer. Is it too dogmatic to say that there was no such thing as intervention at first, nor interpolation: not a spasm, nor an alteration of essential condition; not a jump from rest to motion, from nonentity to pleroma, from pleroma to primitive substance? The whole universe puts the stamp of its method upon the eternal proceeding of the universe. Eternal continuity precludes the possibility of a first act, a first flaking-off, a first motion. The phrase is "I am," but the deep, unbroken breathing that voices it has neither beginning nor end.

But suppose there was a first act, and admit the

claim that it was a supernatural transfer of power, or passage from one state to another, or intrusion of spirit into matter, or waking from rest to motion, or quickening of passive germs, — just as you please to state it. If this act placed all the laws of nature upon their route of gradual development, the act itself is a proclamation of the impossibility of supernatural interference with the method which the act involved. Then it becomes a question of scientific observation of the method; and while the facts are coming in, and opinions differ, we must mark the tendency. And if you hear any noted man of science affirm that he finds nothing in nature incompatible with the idea of miracles, ask him if he finds any thing in nature compatible with it. That is the real point. He may say, particularly if he does not like to compromise his position in an orthodox community, that none of the facts he has ever collected deny the theory of special interventions, and that for all he knows there may be miracles to-day. Yet while he says it, the ground he stands on is consistency and continuity of law. A single break in that lets all his facts through into chaos; and instead of a contriver and constructor he becomes a *chiffonier* or junk-merchant: naturalist and supernaturalist may stock his bag or buy his truck. If a man of science thinks that a thing lies out of his province, he will be very likely to say that he knows nothing against it. He will not meddle with revivals, nor dispute on infant baptism. Politics he may ignore. If he is led to investigate the modern spiritualism, his scientific instinct detects the shadowy nature of the claim that spirits

intrude into the organization of living persons to control them. For the breath of his intellect is the idea of non-intrusion, non-intervention, the inviolability of every province that is controlled by necessary laws. The moment that science consents to apply its principles to mooted questions, delusion vanishes before the steps of method: the forces that are sufficient now are declared to have been always sufficient to transact the business of nature; their gradualism and their adamant sequence tell the whole secret of the past.

A confusion arises from the use of the words Natural and Supernatural. If a man says he is a Naturalist he is accused of confining God to one original act of creation, which put blind forces on their developing way; of supposing that first throb of divinity to widen into the undulations of all phenomena: as if the world were like a cannon-ball that carries an impulse and leaves the cartridge behind, or the complicated motion which the stroke of a cue lends to the balls upon a billiard-table, without following them round. If a man says he is a Naturalist with the divine immanence added, he is accused of making the immanence just as blind a force as the forces it travels with, and it might as well have been left behind. If he says the immanence is a distinct Person and Volition, he is still accused of leaving out the attributes of Paternity and Love: the divine Person only wills the fatefulness of laws. If he says that it is an omnipresent Father of love, who cares for his children, he is accused of investing the logic of the universe with the phrases of religion, since logic is predestination, and that can have no care. If he says that the pre-

destination was of that perfect kind which, in every instance, without sacrificing consistency, meeting selfish expectations, or deferring to human ignorance, secures true welfare to every form of life, the objector replies, "Very well, so I believe." But does he believe so? Then he cannot perceive the legitimate results of such a statement. It sounds like something which he says in a lucid interval, when his brain is not congested with miracle, and he narrowly escapes becoming permanently rational. But this is what every supernaturalist must really believe: that the divine foresight must have arranged for intervention as a feature in its consistency, in order to adapt itself to exigencies by being something different from its own exigency; a gracious coming in at the nick of time to obviate some previous doings of its own, to take back its words by saying something in another key that is not fateful but fatherly, to lie in wait for the critical moment that shall be a signal to fly in the face of the immutable order with signs and wonders, to get its spiritual excellence attested, by means of the little cursory indulgence of a higher law, which science will some day adopt.

Against all this, we must have a mental method that is not content with saying that the evidence for supernatural interventions is defective, or that if there were evidence enough of the right kind they would be admissible. This is not having a mental method that is the counterpart of the universe. The tendency of science proclaims its belief that testimony against itself is an impossibility: as much as if a number of men should take their bible-oath that they felt the

earth roll westward. This is not testifying. We cannot collect evidence from an *eye*-witness ; the method of his mind must affirm the facts. The more an eye-witness swears he observed something, the more he may convince you that his sight is skin-deep. Our method must correspond to the accumulating testimony of science, which is that the divine supernatural is immutable procedure through simple facts of nature and of mind ; the miraculous is impossible and superfluous, because the supernatural is detected everywhere, both in matter and spirit, doing the whole business of Paganism and Christianity, and nourishing the fauna and flora of the soul.

The order of Nature does not merely create an antecedent improbability that an exception should occur in it, but an established order is fatal to the very notion of an exception. This appears best on some plain, indisputable lines of facts, such as that of the invariable disappearance of the soul with the death of the body, and its incapability of reviving that body. All human bodies have kept dead so uniformly, and for so long a time, that we have a right to say that what has occurred nine hundred and ninety-nine times will happen on the thousandth. We are as sure of it as that the sun will rise to-morrow. To say that it is not impossible that the sun may not rise to-morrow, is to put the safety of a phrase against the salutary dependence which we derive from experience. While science and experience proclaim what is actual, it is childish to waste breath in saying that nothing is impossible. The law by which a dead body cannot be revived is an unalterable fate. If any bodies, presumptively dead, revive, the presumption stands corrected.

A favorite objection which has lately been made to meet this view, is, that we arrogate a knowledge of Nature which no man can possess. Who knows what are the laws of Nature, it is said, and if she really had always, and always will have, an invariable conformity to our present experience? What do a thousand years' observation amount to? They subtend too small an arc. And in reality we possess hardly more than a hundred or two years of true empirical observation with precise deduction. Yet, before all the facts are in, it is objected, we proclaim a system of the universe, vote miracles out of it because we have not seen any, and decide against every kind of supernaturalism, because science has not yet found and labelled it.

The answer to this is very simple. Thousands of generations of dead men preceded scientific observation. Their graves built the firm continent of at least one unalterable sequence. And with respect to other facts which have entered into the field of scientific observation, the arc subtended by them, though small, shows drift and direction. Observation increases the draft which that arc makes upon invariable sequence, requires it in every province, cannot stir without it, draws it more firmly with cumulative evidence of law, and summons unity to keep it from straggling on either hand.

“What is the history of every science but the history of the elimination of the notion of creative or other interferences, with the natural order of the phenomena which are the subject-matter of that science?”

All past and present statements of supernatural occurrences have been surmised and pretended outside

of the province of observation and experiment. Therefore there can be neither historical nor scientific proof for them. The past cannot be examined, the present eludes the scientific step, or surrenders at discretion; the surmised facts disappear as soon as the cross-questioning begins.

And it is a fair assumption of science that the forces which are seen to be at work at present, must have been the forces always at work, and that their present method must have been always the same. When, therefore, we perceive no personal necessity, moral or spiritual, for any thing beyond, or supplementary to, that invariable sequence and recurring consistency which is called the system of Nature, we have a right to presume that it was always competent to transact the business of the human race. If at present it supplies our most exacting wants, of physical health, of conscience, of the observation of facts, and the intuition of divine truths, the presumption is in favor that it always did and will. The arc is small, but it stretches both ways with unrefracted suggestion; and scientific observation proceeds powerfully now that it has found this track, and is unfettered by abstract, theologic notions, or the assumptions of supernaturalism.

But what if science should emerge some day upon a higher law of supernatural intrusion? An advocate of this says that "a tree, seeing a dog run to and fro, might call that a miracle. The tree, unable to move from its place, could not conceive of the possibility of voluntary motion. But no law of nature is violated; only a higher power comes in, — the power of animal life." How irrelevant is this. A tree, incapable of astonish-

ment, cannot be imagined to be astonished. A man, capable of rational and spiritual judgments, and of perceiving facts, cannot be remanded into the supposed attitude of the tree; he holds no such fictitious relation to any real or supposed facts, for he is already similar in mental and spiritual quality to any epoch which has claimed the guarantee of miracle.

It is said that "we see such wonderful discoveries made every day of latent powers in Nature, and secrets hidden till now from all men, that we do not know where to put limits to the possibility of the wonderful." To receive a telegram, to have your portrait painted by the sun, to catalogue the metals in the sun's atmosphere, — these things would have seemed miracles a few years ago. Here is a confusion of terms. The *wonderful*, the *incredible*, are words which we apply to the normal developments of science. But the progress of science cannot legitimate an old reputed miracle till it repeats it. When the science that perfects sun-pictures, or analyzes the stellar spectrum, can raise another Lazarus, then the wonder it excites will be *of the same kind* as that which the so-called miracle supposes and propagates. Marvellousness itself, that residue of Fetichism, is the real curiosity in human nature, and not any story which it may invent. Its mythologies are less worth noticing than the fact that the unscientific mind tends constantly to produce them. If marvellousness were an essential quality of human nature, devised for the recognition of the supernatural, it ought to be as strong with cultivated people, and the men whose genius lies in discovery, as with children and barbarians. But it is a rudimentary condition. The child

will hanker for the exceptional, the man for uniformity. Human nature, with all its over-haste, does not really come across the supernatural till the best minds prove that it is impossible unless it is in law. But this uniformity works with such materials that it is a perpetual surprise and stimulus to the imagination. The man of science is always wondering what next will yield to him, so that he enriches his method with the spoils of a universe.

Shakspeare, to give his ghost some plausibility, said there were more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy. The theologian quotes this with a fine disdain of the Naturalist, who is supposed not to allow any thing in heaven and earth but himself and his lean theory. But if there be a Holy Ghost commensurate with the universe, why need little ghosts carry coals to Newcastle? There is One who makes them scent the morning air. The Naturalist sees everywhere through the continuity of law a God, who says to him, "I Am." The supernaturalist jumps in with his god from time to time, and, like the clown in the circus, cheerily announces, "Here we are!"

But the expectation, that science will yet find a law that may undertake the miraculous business of the past and future, persists in alleging our imperfect knowledge of facts. They may betray a different tendency, and interrupt the invariability of phenomena. Are there not already some occult elements which occasionally displace the ordinary processes of the mind, and connect it in an exceptional way with the invisible? And although the majority of the facts of the natural world seem to furnish to science the constancy it de-

lights in, may not the rest, grouped for the present under the term *Spiritualism*, claim a place in the same constant series, and keep a postern open towards the invisible world?

There are, it is true, some occult facts connected with the unconscious or automatic action of the brain, which supply modern spiritualism with all the phenomena that delude it into a belief that dead people communicate, that spirits read through sensitive people sealed books, buried thoughts, remote contingencies, that an ignorant person is more enlightened than Bacon and Newton upon the constitution of the universe, that personal immortality is as tangible as a pump-handle. When these facts, which have been hitherto slurred by scientific investigation, take their legitimate place among the obscure and exceptional traits of the human brain, they will be found to belong, as is already more than suspected, to the great fact that a human brain is a gallery of photographs of memory handed down from the past and enlarged by the present; that they may lie in latency, as in a family lumber-room, and be overlooked or forgotten; that the ancestral brain-cells are liable to revive, like a grain of mummy-wheat in the soil of Ohio; that some sensitive persons can walk through these galleries of another person as a somnambulist takes his unconscious tour on the ridge-pole of a house; that the listeners can be astonished to find their own buried latencies and memories recalled, with appropriate names and sceneries, and striking coincidences; and that there is a subtle connection of the brain with people and neighborhoods that sometimes transcends geography, and receives from distances

impressions that do not arrive by any ordinary express. The witch of Endor may raise the phantom of Samuel out of the brain which the dotting Saul brings to the interview. The solitary brain, without the witch, and without the expense of a fee, has many a time raised the dead into objectiveness and overwhelming prominence. When the cross-questioning begins, we discover that nothing but the brain is present and alive.

The general drift of all natural things towards a theory of natural uniformity accumulates the probability against any fault or dislocation like this assumed one of spiritual agency. The theory that can absorb the greatest number of facts, and persist in doing so, generation after generation, through all changes of opinion and of detail, is the one that must rule all observation. The occult facts do not like to meet this theory, and have lately slipped down a back alley, expecting to meet there the ravishing Thisbe of the preternatural, as they cry, "I see a voice; now will I to the chink." When the back-alley turns out to be a blind lane, in spite of its obscure attractiveness, we shall hear them objurgate, "O wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss!" The occult facts will helplessly huddle there awhile, then, returning to the high-road, be taken up by the natural order and restored to their relatives.

The "more things in heaven and earth" are the very things we need to have brought in as fast as possible, to keep up a constant confirmation of the impossibility of getting old miracles accredited or working new ones. As fast and as far as we know any thing, the whole drift sets against them.

Piazzi Smith, the devout astronomer, is mad enough to propose the divine inspiration to solve the mystery of the Great Pyramid. He finds the dry and linear measures of the Egyptians preserved within it, and is astonished to notice how nearly they anticipated those of England. The divine immanence, through the natural processes of the mind, does not seem to him competent to have invented the "sacred British inch," or the dry measure of the Nilotic people. God must make a special incursion, and betimes too, before a yard of tape or a bushel of malt can be delivered to modern unbelievers.

The very channels which the astronomer explored were long ago discovered by the Arabs, who put in at a small hole of the rubbish a cat, which quickly threaded the mystic interior after her kittens at the other aperture, and came to daylight at the true entrance. Any common thing that runs about after its own kind will betray the direction of the invisible. For the greater number of natural facts must always be the forerunners of the scientific mind.

Dr. Bushnell, searching among our mental operations for some element that corresponds to his idea of the supernatural, finds it in every free act of ours, the choice of truth, the preference for good against the stronger motive that inclines to evil. When we act from passion we are natural, when we act from choice we are supernatural. He thinks this element of freedom comes into human nature like a new cause that was not before in the world. Here is a confusion that arises from the prestige attached to the scriptural contrast of the natural with the spiritual man. Paul's

antithesis points to a change in a man's quality, but not necessarily in the natural laws which produce it. When a man chooses the good, he is simply becoming the man he was organized to be; and he does it by means of the laws of his organization. In this sense the natural and the spiritual cannot be distinct. There is no intrusion of a new cause that was not before in the world. The waking of his will is no more supernatural than the waking of his body in the morning. If he burns off his underbrush, his oaks and maples germinate. As well might fermentation and defecation be termed supernatural.

The true mental method, then, is Antisupernaturalism. But this is decried as a negation. Let us rise from this, it is said, into positive affirmation of spiritual things, and build them with what symmetry the mind suggests. We are tired of disbelieving; our souls feel as jaded as the one sailor in a gang who should push his capstan bar against all the rest. Let us take the real motion, and get under weigh. Some radical thinkers are disposed to lend an ear to this complaint about the destructive tendency of antisupernaturalism. They cry, Let us revert to central things; let us collect all constructive truths and attributes. Foremost of constructive truths is the method of the divine mind, as it is seen in all orders, creatures, knowledges. Why say it is destructive? Here's a whole forenoon travelling westward, and waking up the scorn of every meridian at the slur upon its fidelity. Method is organic, and it builds. It necessarily denies all the miraculous mythologies of the past and present, as the new astronomy denies the Ptolemaic epicycles,

which were once the belief of all mankind. It has taken the sun and moon, and the influences of all the planets, to expunge them from the science of the world. But what was it that denied them? The positive truth of the natural order of the heavens. The epicycles were the destructives; they upset all planetary order, because they went into artificial combination against it; they were at best a cumbersome expedient to represent the apparent motions of the heavenly bodies, and as long as men's minds followed the complicated round, they did not walk with God. The radical thinker must make the antisupernatural method the main-spring of his whole activity. It must set in motion all his gifts, from perception to the subtlest report of feeling and imagination. It is the co-ordinating principle of his whole intelligence, because it is the supernature of the natural world.

What are some of the benefits of this mental method? If it represents the divine harmony, we shall expect to see truthful and desirable results in the whole moral and spiritual constitution. We restore health to all our faculties when we recur to the normal relations that exist between the mind and the world; the very gesture is the first appeal of the sick man to those habits of air, exercise and regularity, which refresh a jaded system. The intellect pulls the stroke oar among the divine crew whose forces mark the rhythm that spreads on all sides into the obscurest inlets of nature.

It is a great benefit to emancipate a mind from the habit of limping after its own truths on the crutch of mythological authority, and to show its relation of respect to the past on the ground that it blossomed with

the same moral law that beautifies the present; to teach the natural permanence, continuity and uniformity of all spiritual truths, whether they result from our accumulated sensations, or from an intuitional ability, or whether the latter derives them from the totality of the former. A right mental method gives them all the advantage of science. No theology can juggle with them or trade in them, either with heaven or hell to boot. The man sees that *he is* what he may expect. It puts a stop to all superstitious aspirations for a marvellous inburst of power to influence, convert or save. The tide is always moulded by the configuration of the shore; it reaches every man where he stands, as it does all forms of things in the world that are fashioned while they stay it. The right mental method keeps every man cool and safe in the dark, like the healthy child who goes up the dim winding staircase to its slumber, having gone up so often in the noontime that the night shineth like the day. Method does not tremble on the verge of hysterics, dreading some epiphany besides the day; nor will it hanker secretly for assignations carried on mid the penumbra of Nature, where still some facts lie in half light: they will become familiar enough in the gradual spreading of the morn, whose broad laugh will expose their secret paramours. The whole moral system becomes toned by regular and even expectation when the mind is content with the tendency of the greater number of phenomena, and expects that it will include them all.

The true method brings God to man through all the legitimate channels of knowledge, deduction, emotion, and human love. They are subject to a continuous

agency, which cannot be stimulated to alter the nature and number of its facts. All the real members of a finite soul learn their exercise as God shall make the competent gestures. There is honest bread for each. The dragon which guarded golden apples is discovered to be God's aversion to extraordinary expectations; and the garden of the Hesperides is now well laid down to fodder and esculents. Each human faculty is a household that must expect its providence by its own road, as the butcher and milkman arrive by theirs, and not as peculiar favor down the chimney into the pot by preternatural gymnastics. The laws of life, health, pain and death, the consciousness of the avoidable and the unavoidable, will be taken out of the region of theological surmising, and all men will grow hilarious with the conviction that God continues to be sane. The steadfast and sanguine frame, in which heaven is all the time, will disconcert our conceited effort to force it into special providences and means of extra grace. The pulpit orator, ashamed to pray for them any longer, will probably turn his attention to the fact that all men have what they get, and he will stimulate their hopes by the knowledge of the laws that prevail in the house-keeping of God. The sailor straining at the recusant capstan bar, who keeps the anchor in the mud, is Supernaturalism.

What recesses of the human soul cannot be reached by the even tide of God? Its refreshment slides up from gift to gift, and tosses its spray into the face of imagination, and lies deep around the rooted senses on which men stand to see their hope of immortality and consciousness of the divine presence reflected in it. If

it ebbs, we recollect the image and yearn for the diurnal freshness. It lifts us, with the rest of Nature, and all things find themselves blithely afloat. Nice observation of an insect's embryo, warm enthusiasm for the moral law, the tenderness that seeks its human kind, and the ecstasy that claims kinship with the invisible order,—the whole of the soul is carried round with the planets, and rolls into the orderly influence of all the heavenly lights: not one faculty can lag behind, or be dropped out of this mental unity. Nothing truly precious swims helplessly in the great wake of God's clear method, but every part of the man can be, and, therefore, strives to be, abreast of the other. The mountains follow the earth, the air has clasped the mountains, and daylight and starlight stream forward entangled in the air. Clutching for dear life to each other, all solid and tenuous things describe the great, invariable motion, and God is in the manifoldness, drenching it with uniformity.

II.

AMERICA'S DEBT.

IF any person inclines to say that America may receive the distinction of a Religion whose peculiarities will belong to the wants and characters of the country, he is told that Religion is a fixed body of ideas, or a tendency that is independent of time and place, is at home in all climates and outlives them all, and remains essential, while worship and sacramental customs alone are modified. Then if you ask for a statement of this tendency, or what these fixed ideas are which create Religion, you get as many answers as there are denominations. But all these answers, the most liberal as well as the most conservative, agree in one point — to affirm that there can be no Religion where there is not something to mediate between man and God. Therefore, the assumption is, a religion for America must conform to this universal necessity, and nothing in mixture of race, in physical situation or in social and political ideas can select her from mankind, to recommend some peculiarity, or to detach religion from its general dependence upon mediatorship.

And we are asked to notice that the human mind has been occupied for several thousand years with this idea,

which began in the cruellest forms of sacrifice, to reach at length, through many stages of intellectual improvement, the feeling that men are united to God rationally by the intervening agency of some sovereign person's nature and character. God need no longer be flattered nor deprecated; no human heart held dripping toward the sky can do aught but confirm divine aversion, and no substitution of one heart can satisfy infinite justice, nor fill with its blood the interval between earth and heaven. But the most liberal thinkers still try to save something from this disintegrated doctrine of sacrifice. They cling to this: that there is no way of getting over from man to God till one great heart bridges the chasm, and pulsates with the thronging of a myriad feet that carry on commerce between the finite and the infinite.

It is said to be another case of American conceit and crudeness, when the Atlantic is expected to interrupt this development of humanity. Can three thousand miles of salt water break this dyke of life, which so many generations have builded with their thought and feeling? It has its roots far down in the rubbish which savages threw in to sprawl, dark and unsightly, on the bottom of life's mystery: their dread of Nature, their suspicions of the invisible, their frantic bribes of innocent blood, their whole cowering barbarism. Upon this chance heap went cleaner substitutes of offering and property in every form; any thing to help get man's head above water, towards that glimmer of the light and air. Schemes, dogmas and ecclesiastical furniture went next, the lighter rubbish of the mind; but the whole pile is justified clear through from the base upward by the one feeling that man must get to God:

something must intervene to plant the feet upon, something must mediate. It was surmised that all this work must be in the right direction, because the downward pressure was diminishing, and more light came to envelop the endeavor. At length the path emerges, and the sun shines so clear, that men are dazzled into presuming that God has been all the time descending in exact deference to every stage of man's upbuilding. This human struggle has been a divine travail towards an incarnation. Let men see it as they stand at length firmly above the waves. Here it is, the great Person, both divine and human: he will answer all questions, meet all wants. Without him man is not a child and God is not a father. Both parties are non-plussed for want of a bridge. There can be no other communication. The Atlantic cannot be austere enough to deter the logic of history from colonizing a new world. The American is not independent of it. He must import it with the multiplication table and the rule of three. Trading and Religion cannot migrate out of the universal laws and exigencies. It is only some destructive radical's conceit that a new country offers to Yankee enterprise a chance to invent directer and cheaper routes to God.

It is true that rapid prosperity has been surprised into the indulgence of a flippant tone, which gratifies any foreign observer whose object is to strengthen his own patriotism by counting our defects. He will have no difficulty in deprecating a contemptuous sciolism which infects our thinking, business, and amusements. It seems that the most successful citizens rectify the estimate of the earth's age by the date of their nativity.

At least they admit no chronological periods of importance previous to the settlement of the country. This is partly a fault of position. Old ties, old languages, festivals and customs, were surrendered by a few emigrants, whose successors undertake at a disadvantage the creation of new forms, while they betray that the struggle for life has made them impatient. There is a culture of fine arts and letters, by no means of the philological kind, that mitigates the attacks of an untoward climate upon the nerves, and touches the temper with mansuetude. The full pocket is slapped less loudly, and nobler fashions of life and pleasure levy toll upon it. Such an influence unfortunately does not yet prevail where the people have been driven to fight for a position in which the first necessities of existence can be obtained. The effort has made them curt in their depreciation of arts that seem to them superfluous. And it even threatens to become a principle of the practical education which the town furnishes to native born and emigrant. At least one singing-book that we have seen, used by some common schools, expresses it with unshaken sincerity and confidence : —

“Long ago, long ago
Under Grecian rule,
They could not raise one spelling-book,
To teach a boy at school.
Dark day! Iron age!
Better times we see :
And the youth of classic fame
Were not so blest as we.

Shout, Shout! all the boys,
Raise the song again, —

We are stronger than the Greeks,
And we'll be wiser men; " &c.*

That famous schoolmaster, Tyrtæus, whose soul set Grecian sinew to the key of freedom, taught men to fight better than they knew, and with a longer breath; for they served these American occasions which we use for a license to forget with such hilarious satisfaction. Let some one infuse into our primary rhymes a sense of the benefit which battling civilizations have done to America, as they advanced to strains of their moment's enthusiasm, to prepare her way.

There is a sweet proverb in the Talmud that "The world is only saved by the breath of the school-children." But youth itself is lost when some reverence for the old youth that fostered it is not felt coming from its lips.

But when it is said, we inherit from the past a human need of mediatorship, that anticipates the first gesture which Religion can ever make here, and decides the sources and supply of spiritual truth for America, an inference is drawn from the past which converts it from a teacher into a tyrant, and repeats the sorrowful mistake of all theologies.

I have yet to meet the man, however radical and sceptical, who will deny that we depend upon the past. It is a cheap device of the newspapers to represent a radical thinker, axe in hand, furiously laying about him in the underbrush, and levelling with indiscriminate stroke the weeds that spindled up in a week, and

* This stupendous pæan is sung to the tune of "Nellie Bly."

the close-grained trees that envelop with their bark a thousand years. Any thing that has a root is supposed to be predestined fuel for the radical's crackling fire. The popular fancy constructs him toasting his thin extremities, and thawing out bloodless veins, at a blaze of cedars of Lebanon and the product of extensive clearings of the Mount of Olives. Into this costly smoke, fed with cinnamon and sandal-wood, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense that were tributes of Eastern wisdom to the eternal child of truth, he throws the bonds which mankind has given to Life, Death and Immortality, and is amused to watch the bankruptcy curling up the chimney. But if the public chose, it might observe the modern thinker walking in the shade of the primeval trees that still grapple with the breasts of earth, and tasting gratefully their fruits. Would it avail to insist upon this? Is it ever worth while for a man formally to deny that he believes twice two to be a minus quantity? It ought to be impossible to find anybody who suspects him of believing it.

The sower, who goes forth to sow his seed, looks straight before him, and scatters his germs into the centuries that lie beneath his feet. Who, indeed, denies the Past so effectively as the conservative who twists his neck with ogling her over his shoulder, while his feet, no longer vision-guided, stumble on their way to the day's errand? The Past is not a mummy-pit where a man rummaging for ornaments gets stifled with the dust of countless dead people. But it is the planet's made soil. The primeval oceans deliberated over it, and left a deposit of their minute forms of life. The mammoth rivers tore the hill-sides with white

tusks, and ran down to estuaries with silt that tells how long they had been browsing. The glacier slipped over the whole scene, noiseless as thought, and as well-freighted. Its blue share both ploughed and sowed. And on the surface gained by this extensive labor of epochs, the skies shed their rain and successive races their blood. Now a man plants a slip of a geranium bush in several million years of tillage and top-dressing. Does he think he has got an inch or two of yesterday in his trowel? It is so heavy that, if he only knew it, he would drop it as if he saw it was a mountain. That young man's laurel has the pink of all the Cæsars' cheeks glistening through its morning's dew. A crown of thorns is woven for these foreheads of ours out of more Gethsemanes than history had time to reckon. A few turns of the spade anywhere will refute the nervous hurry of these second-hands on the face of our time, for there are places where a day laborer can pitch a century into his cart in a forenoon, and wheel it off to mend a hole in the highway.

During some explorations which were lately made upon the coast of Crete, the recent tokens of the Turk were first thrown aside, to uncover those of the Venetian, beneath which lay successively the forgotten years of Greek, Phœnician and Pelasgic cities, till a few stone relics of the cave-dwellers, tossed out undermost of all, lay on the beach for the tide to wet. It once slid up to flatter the feet of men who dropped their brine into it before earth learned the fashion of counting human tears. Upon what a concrete we stand: our minute's opportunity secured by several oblivions! But they are not in fact forgotten, for we recognize

them whenever honor and truth ask for seats at our fireside. These guests have been travelling to keep their appointment with us ever since the world's surface had pathways. Now the conscience passes to and fro by broad routes that were first nothing but the channel of some barbarian's tear. When that little furrow set out to mark some plain dictates of right and wrong, that might reclaim the ferocious uncertainties and fence them with human security and comfort, enclosed in which early smiles might spring to attract heaven's sunshine, the colonization of six and thirty States with liberty was begun.

When we mention the tears which have been extorted by the conscience in its agonizing to set free Truth and win Religion by it, we are reminded of a function of the Past that is little understood. Perhaps we are too young and prosperous to observe that mankind has been shedding tears that we may taste our truth well filtered. But it is so. The most cheerful action is as pathetic as the most tragic: for its easy movement, that charms the beholders, is a hint to them of generations of men and women put on the rack till the sweet confession was gathered at their dying lips. All the torture has been left behind in the distorted limbs. We cannot be honest in our friendships and business, or exchange these new amenities of living, and conspire to put the rights of man in a safe place, at a less expense than the perils and longings of all the Past.

“For a tear is an intellectual thing,
And a sigh is the sword of an angel king,
And the bitter groan of a martyr's woe
Is an arrow from the Almighty bow.”

The best adorer that the Past retains is not the conservative who thinks that an old truth must be a seasoned one, but the liberal who perceives that the new truth is a filtered one. The conservative esteems the crudeness that has age upon it; the liberal prefers the age that runs through crudeness to a limpid drop. He does not care to taste at the previous stages, not even at the one before the last. But he venerates the mighty ferment of Nature, and never forgets that human blood and tears were thrown in to clarify the bumpers of Godhood that he tosses down.

He claims and clings to every name that is expressive of past excellence: to the name of that great soul who has been elected Mediator by Christendom, and thrust into an office that only ill-conceived texts can arrogate for him. All the Jewish assumptions of this kind that he ever made were contradicted by the simplicity of his spiritual life, as it relied upon the private instinct of each soul to find its God at hand. Whatever is beautiful in the morals and piety which make his character so impressive to the memory, only serves to show how the page is disfigured by the doctrines of Christship; and we shrink from admitting that he could have entertained them. We perceive that they are nothing but verbal gestures that strive in vain to limit and direct his soul's great movement, by which he anticipated all official station and lent his personal vitality to the cause of mankind. He permitted God to become incarnate, and so he wins the supremacy of a place by the side of all other men, in whom the same mystery is perpetually enacted.

At one time there were as many pieces of the true

cross, well authenticated, as would suffice to build a meeting house ; but all crucified men have preferred to touch the relic of his sympathy and brotherly love. And that we have inherited, emphasized, enlarged, organized, and translated into definite actions. Modern blood hastens to repair wounds and ghastly lacerations ; to heal that thrust in the side of humanity, from which a sacred stream continually flows. White lips languish on crosses close at hand, but they do not summon a distant redeemer. And the modern thinker may wait at the foot of the old cross, with all the heart of that cluster of women, till the head droops in the kind swoon which takes that martyr off to rest, like a nurse bearing an infant to its mother ; but instead of trying to save his soul by getting that death imputed to him, he notes the last gesture, turns it to confidence and leaves the place : he has no time to linger around a dying moment, and no care to fancy that it has a mysterious connection with his life. His own head is alive with doubt, dismay, unsatisfied desires, the crucial moments of existence. Has God forsaken him ? He lays his head directly upon the bosom of God, with nothing intermediate, not the most beloved pulse, not the insinuation of the most sacred memory to divide and distract the closeness of heaven. He heard the mob of passions and problems shouting, " Let him save himself " — and he does. If the prophets and martyrs have left one legacy to America, it is that (not so much legacy as privilege) of prophesying and suffering by direct contact with God. Nothing but that directness ever did or ever can draw martyrdom down while rising to prophecy.

Ransack history to see if you can find any other mediatorship than the example of the great souls who spurned mediators, and rushed into divineness all alone. Out of the wine-press which they trod alone drips for us the vintage of direct appeal to the immediate God. We catch it in the cup of our knowledge and attainment, mere earthen-ware, perhaps, plain to ugliness, or perhaps sumptuously embossed and ornamented, and carved by lines that thousands of years have fondly hung over, meditating and correcting; it is a relic of the past, but the drink is the present inspiration: our own private and incessant God fills it to the brim. Plato and Socrates are still extant in the chiselling; our lips feel kindred rubies from the East clustering to meet them; a world's midnight thinking has gone into that least curve to the greatest content, a world's noonday acting has fashioned its foot: shall we venture to say that the cross of Jesus is with other crosses in the stem? Yes: but the drink, the rapture that sends our veins heaven-high, the mouthful, the soulful — that is *God with us*, as He was with those before.

And see how America has inherited from the past a material condition and a moral temper of self-help, which provide all the circumstances that correspond to this independent gesture of Religion. We still have priests, bishops, and overseers of souls, with functions which a mature person finds superfluous: yet the colonizing of a new world meant that an experiment should be tried of a world without priestcraft, on a continent where every man could have religion like air, gratis, by lifting his window, or turning

the handle of his door. As wealth makes our cities impatient of frugality and simple ways, we begin to recollect that there are cathedrals in the old world: architects import the details of York, Westminster, and Strasburg, and furnish them to building committees who want to run up a costly box of a plaything, and a corresponding bill. Westminster's lines and arches, which spring grandly to cover a space that a small city might occupy, are pinched down to the capacity of a thousand people; the great rose windows shrink to knot-holes; the glass resents a plain, straight-forward daylight, and, in short, the dim religiousness sets in. Still, a cathedral would have swamped the Mayflower, and they took great pains to keep it out of the hold; and the grim, austere land was settled and subdued without the æsthetic influences of stained glass and ogive lines. The polity of Plymouth Rock was anti-liturgical. Everybody was in the open weather in summer and winter. Now some of us are getting catarrhal, and run to shelter out of the sincere climate of the Republic. Nevertheless, our health is promoted by ventilation and the outside of buildings; and there is no country in the world where such a broad sheet of sunshine lies over one political area. It invites us to run to and fro to flowers and labor in its robust actinic ray. Every brain comes into God's weather furnished with its own roof. When souls discover that vaulted aisles bleach instead of protecting them, they prefer to be dipped in a horizon full of warmth, and drenched at every sense and pore with divine virility.

Universal suffrage is not yet the symbol of each

man's private worth, but only of his responsibility to be worthy. It ought to notify that he has an income not appraised by the assessor; namely, that he is a moral and spiritual person, too costly for the purses of cliques and oligarchies; never so much the ally of truth as when he stands alone. He is set down in these empires of states where nobody can jostle him: he begins to be effective when he is not welded in a crowd. It is true, parties have their whippers-in, and we are threatened with the drill-master in the best of causes; but a continent that is too large for fencing suggests to the citizens constant sallies and excursions, it being plainly the genius of the place to preserve individualism. That asserts itself from Boston, through Utah to the Golden Gate, in all the excesses and virtues of an ambitious society. Shall we tame it by lassoing and corraling all the individuals? No, but rather by leaving each man free to catch himself. This is a work of time, but any theory of government, society or religion, that undertakes to interfere with it in disgust or alarm, in high-bred contempt for inconveniences, is out of date, and cannot, therefore, make the new movement of the spiritual nature which is to free religion from mediatorship.

But it is objected that no new movement can develop any thing new out of the religious elements of human nature which have furnished belief and moral behavior to all the countries of the earth. It is said that religion is derived from primitive truths imbedded in the substance of the soul; some of them are moral truths, and some of them express the relation which the creature sustains to the Creator. America must

accept these universal necessities. She cannot improvise a new digestive apparatus, with food to correspond, such as no race of men has yet tasted. She can emancipate mankind from every thing but its organization. That she must accept, else emancipation itself has no continuance. And it is vitally dependent upon religious truths. Can America set up housekeeping without a practice of the divine economy of the Beatitudes? Can she afford to do without a God, or to overlook the retributive agency of evil? Certainly not. These are powerful objects towards which the country must put forth its characteristic strength. They can only be acquired by the entirely original, unbiased efforts of each individual, independent of his memory of the past. Nothing is fit to drink but the water which you draw from your own well freshly every morning. The Beatitudes were drawn in that way, and quenched one man's thirst. Did the other people cease to be dry while they were looking on to see him drink? It might be plain to them that the draught was refreshing; they might extol it with parched lips, and cry, "Give me to drink!" But if a man who draws his own Beatitudes makes a proposition to furnish other parties, he can only be understood to say to them: "There is an everlasting well of water in you; don't try to let your bucket down into me; besides, I go away; but men will be thirsty everywhere, and there will be water everywhere. Will it quench thirst for people to remember adoringly that I drew my own water, and how good it was?" For a beatitude is not revealed until it is personally experienced.

There is a popular trick of remembering the impressive accounts of men in India, Greece and Judea, who had an instinct for water, and knew where it lay hid beneath those fervent skies. And this is called Religion. Men collect in churches, and lay hold of some kind of mediatorial tackle, and haul at it while the preacher gives the time, encouraging them with descriptions of what he knows they will bring up. But what is it when it arrives at the surface? Why, it is just what they let down, a mediating bucket full of texts. The water is not there, not even the person is there whose soul was a well-mouth communicating with the water. But it lies underneath the whole earth's crust; and these other living persons who have rigged this derrick that cranes across to Judea might hear it trickling under their feet, or be apprised of its presence by the immediate divining of their thirst.

The reason why so many moral battles have to be fought afresh, and the new causes of righteousness are slow to enlist their natural allies, is because the popular religion is so largely made up of recalling the nature of Jesus; holding his words heaven-distant, at the tongue's end; clinging for justification to the garment stained with his blood; trying to make a ladder of his cross. Men climb to the top of that, and are no nearer human rights and sanities than they were before. It is just high enough to give the churches an outlook over people's heads. They can "see Jerusalem and Madagascar;" entranced, they cry *hush* to the pother that enslaving iniquities make beneath them. Lately these true believers remained perched

up there so long, enjoying the beatific prospect, that half a million men got nailed to as many fresh crosses at the head of graves where slavery lies buried. Then they come down and vote it magnificent. But they are soon up again. It is a wasteful and slovenly kind of religion, this pulling at the skirts of a mediator. America has lost too much time in that way already, and paid roundly for absence of mind.

Put it to common sense, then, if the proposition to emancipate America from this hectoring stepmother of tradition into the immediate liberty of the sons of God, be not a constructive one. It is so, if the mission of Truth be to organize and save by the divineness of the instant and not of the memory. The book is not yet printed that provides for the emergencies of our future. There are hundreds of books, reverend with age, that imply them, but nothing is so futile as implication. It can only be read clearly by means of such a fresh inspiration of duty and courage as makes the reading superfluous.

America is an opportunity to make a Religion out of the sacredness of the individual. She did not invent the idea, for it has been implied through the successive stages of knowledge and civilization. It was implied when an old cave-dweller succeeded in making a stone lance-head that would kill a mammoth. When God invented the human race, and selected the first men out of animalism and set them on precarious legs, he implied the sacredness of the creature; and the implication went groping into and through all forms of religion and the books that chronicled them. The old Buddhist implied America when he made a

fight with the Brahman over the doctrine of Caste. The Persian implied the superiority of the individual over the dark forces of Nature when he called the soul out of Ahriman, or the principle of evil, into the light of the sun. The Greek framed the proud thought in his story of Prometheus freeing man from his dependency upon the blind fatalities of life. Socrates implied it every time he stopped at a carpenter's or currier's door, and brought out the man's notions upon politics and virtue, to show him how conventional they were, and how far below his own sense of the handsome and proper. The Psalms of David imply citizenship and inalienable rights in every word about walking uprightly, working righteousness, and speaking the truth in the heart; in all the objurgations of the oppressor, the pleas to God to defend the poor and fatherless, do justice to the afflicted and needy, and deliver them out of the hand of the wicked. The same insinuations prolong themselves into the speech of Jesus, where they gather meaning from the command to stand fast in the truth that maketh free, and from the golden rule, which Confucius had already promulgated to a nation more liberal than the Jews.

This republican implication was made more notably by Paul than by any other voice in the New Testament. Compared with the twelfth chapter of the First of Corinthians, for instance, all the fraternal sayings of Jesus appear abstract and colorless. They contain the brotherhood of man, to be sure, but it is as the nebula contains the planets. Paul gave the first rounding touch to that fire-mist of sentiment which has become solid ground beneath the nineteenth century.

He wrote merely to advise a Church to coöperate in the display of its spiritual gifts, and he encumbers his manly text with allusions to miracles, discerning of spirits, and interpretation of tongues. But when he says, "By one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, for the body is not one member but many," he seems to be in conference with Jefferson and Franklin, proposing his draught towards the basis of the Declaration of Independence. Read in that light the chapter might astonish Europe, who has had it upon her pulpits for centuries, but has not even yet introduced equality into the pews. So much for the value of truths that are so vaguely implied that an afterthought is necessary to liberate their meaning. The afterthought is the genuine revelation.

The abolition of slavery was involved in the statement made to the disciples: "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." But who were included by that glittering generality, "all ye"? Only at first the knot of disciples, and, by implication, all future followers of the Master. But Onesimus was not included so far as he continued to be the chattel of a Christian; and when he was returned to his owner, the late campaigns of the American people were implied, and not emancipation. Nineteen centuries bleed to clarify that text, and precipitate its undetermined qualities into the rights of individuals. That blood has been the really efficacious revelation of fraternity, whose rubricated text finds no Bible large enough to hold it.

It has been assumed that the modern regard for

woman, which involves her gradual release from antique disabilities, may be directly traced to the golden rule, since it enjoins that we must do to men what we would prefer that they should do to us. But what moral scope and intention were expressed by that statement? No more than were when Confucius anticipated it. It is not a question of how much human equality the present can gather and reflect upon it, but of how much it really reflected at the time it was uttered. If we can be permitted to aggrandize the old texts by modern experiences, we can easily interpret the belief of Jesus in a personal devil, and in the possession by demons, into a scientific acknowledgment of the malign influences of unfortunate births, and hysteric, epileptic, and insane conditions.

Professor Maury, the distinguished observer of the laws of winds and storms, discovered a forecasting of his own theory of the rotatory movement of the cyclone, and of the circular sweep of the storm-bearing currents, in the text of Ecclesiastes: "The wind goeth toward the South, and turneth about unto the North; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits." It needed no church weathercock to teach as much as that.

So we can undertake to manage the plain belief of Scripture in a second visible coming of a Judge and Savior, and let it down softly into the representation that Jesus comes by development of spiritual truth. But these are the fraudulent accommodations of occupants of modern pulpits, who try desperately to save at once the old text and their common sense. One of the two must be surrendered; for the point is, that the

old texts meant another thing to the utterers and hearers, who never anticipated this modern jugglery which undertakes to spiritualize their delusive statements; they meant merely what they said, and clung to it till reality outfaced them, and would not have felt indebted to any one who should insist that they meant something different.

If we mean something different, let us express it in texts of our own, and not attempt to procure spurious authority for our meaning, by extorting it from the lips of men who held obsolete views of nature, life, and society.

When the world-old golden rule was reaffirmed by Jesus, it carried only his feeling that men must always offer the treatment that they prefer to receive. But, so far as the political, legal, or social equality of women is concerned, the word "men" expressed the ordinary intention of the age, as the word "citizen" does in our constitution; it never entered the mind of the reproducer of that primitive natural preference for fair-dealing, that it should include the emancipation of woman. It nowhere appears that the idea had dawned upon his moral consciousness.

There are traces, on the contrary, that Jesus shared the ordinary oriental feeling upon the relation of women to men. He treated his favorites with consideration, perhaps with tenderness; and what man ever did less? But he betrayed the same spirit which appears in the Epistles of Paul, who derived it from his own position in race and history, and needed not to catch it by infection. We detect, in the interview with Mary and Martha, all the pleased absorption of a modern mysta-

gogue who has an adoring woman for a listener, while the householder and elder sister overheats herself in the kitchen that he and his retinue may be fitly entertained. The most inveterate vegetarian and ascetic will confess that more than one thing is needful in housekeeping. Even the New Testament represents that the Son of Man came eating and drinking, as probably did his disciples ; and there are hints that they were not averse from being entertained. If Mary had been dismissed to help her sister, a lesson in the golden rule would have been administered, and both of them might then have passed precious hours at his feet. The good part to choose must be found in manly and womanly fidelity to all reasonable service. Christianity neither emphasizes the equality of woman within her own sex, nor her right to all the opportunities she may decide to claim.

It was not till Christianity found Greek refinement on its way to the West, and met there the superior reverence for woman among the Teutonic races, that Europe began to entertain a better opinion. The literalist has been always right in maintaining that human slavery and the subjection of woman can be clearly vindicated by the text and practice of the Bible.

The moral sense declares, "I have heard that it hath been said by Paul of olden time, but *I say* a more excellent thing." We reject his half-theological, half-animal theory of marriage, and resist his contemptuous denial of woman's personal independence in the church ; and then how much else comes tumbling to the ground ! Woman recovers rights of person, of property, of the widest education (such as the ancient

Lesbian school anticipated), of independent livelihood, and of careers in every direction corresponding to capacity. Where is all this implied in the New Testament? Its spirit of humanity may claim direct paternity for all these generous schemes of the modern conscience, when the doctrine of particles of matter, maintained by the Egyptians and by Democritus, can prove to be the father of the atomistic theory of Dalton. He reveals and organizes, gives law and numerical ratio, to the fumbling abstraction with which the ancients inaugurated the career of this new science.

Centuries of housekeeping, of improving politics, ameliorated races, the emergence of a middle class, the development of labor, machinery, motive powers, of popular reading and writing, at length make the implication of equal rights, always latent in the conscience, emphatic, directly put, and formidable. It was better conceived and handled by Buddhism than by the texts of the New Testament. But there is no revelation till an act takes the place of uncommitted sentiment.

The moral sense has fashioned the coast-lines and inlets that become the configuration of every age; but it has an exacting and fastidious ear. It listens at its work, and never appears to be content with the rote of the shore it has made. It seems to be unreliable and destructive, as it crumbles old cliffs and submerges districts to encroach upon habitable soil; but it only prepares fresh conveniences. It will not do for an apostle to tie his boat at the old water-mark, if he prefers to be afloat and in commerce with mankind.

The advancing conscience stands deep above the spot where he rocked lazily at the pier which he reached with so much labor. The tide is only dangerous when it becomes stagnant, and its waifs and strays rot upon the beach, and spread through the neighborhood infection instead of hardness.

The explicitness of old Scriptures is an imputation of the modern sense. All of them latently presume the honor of the human nature out of which they flowed; but when the time is ripe for redeeming these fine hints, and man waits to act amid concurring circumstances, he need not go back to inspire himself with implications. He is the sacred individual who has been expected.

If he is, he cannot begin with the idea that Religion is a long-seasoned set of statements that comprise the spiritual man. He cannot begin to conceive of a spiritual man till his inspiration makes him forget his memory. Then he will know that religious ideas are not a clique sitting in the mind apart, to issue a programme of gestures and proper feelings, either with the authority or by the help of some past epoch; but he leaps into Religion with every pulse of emotion, pries into it with all his mental curiosity, recognizes it in the latest law divulged, honors it by preserving his health, defends it across the bodies of the prostrate poor and miserable, who see in him their mediator before the infinite, as he deposits opportunity for them with his vote. Six hours after daybreak in Europe, the sun touches his eyelids with red borrowed from all her battlefields; that fellow-blood purges his visual ray from purblind histories of truths and poli-

ties not half worked out, of religious systems that only contain America by implication, of ascriptions of praise, through Jesus Christ, for the failures of a thousand years. He leaps out of bed, and touches the world's opportunity with his feet. His superb disdain of the old-fashioned style of dangling after mediators rolls between him and the Old World like an Atlantic ; but through the depth of it hearts telegraph to him, and the instantaneous message puts a girdle of promise round the earth. He asks heaven for the day's business, worships when he transacts it nobly, and binds his soul to eternity by the filaments of every nerve he has. They are not transmitting the past sayings of great men ; they are jumping with life to the lips, hand, and brain. His soul is not feeding on old honey, but the brain-cells receive and work over pollen that his morning gathered, as he went about detecting justice, charity, and the grace of life, in the act of blooming over a whole continent.

III.

THE AMERICAN OPPORTUNITY.

THIS deposit of history which we are disposed to call the American Opportunity, is homogeneous throughout. Its religion and its polity came down together, quite unsuspected by any temporary forms or stages of either, and may be found lying together on the site they have reached, wherever we penetrate beneath sectarian and democratic drift. Individualism, extricating itself from the governmental jealousy of the Old World, asserts itself here in favor of a society that shall be more accordant with natural principles. The law of individualism is that human welfare is secured by the least amount of governing and of theologizing: not the selfish welfare of single persons, but a coöperation more disinterested than any place has yet attained. The country must not contain a horde of units without any unifying principle, nor surrender every temper and grade of culture to a quarrel with its neighbor, that would result in the old-fashioned interferences of the strongest and the canniest. But the individual finds himself thrown upon his own resources of morals and religion, under circumstances that impel him to cultivate thrift, but also fraternity. He is his own king and bishop, but his

neighbor is one also. If they compete at first, they will discover that it is an old centralizing folly, which would eventually select some oligarchy of the adroitest competitors to set over their heads, to hamper personal freedom instead of defining it. Where the person is left most to himself he discovers soonest the paths of natural affinity, following which he steps into a crowd of men who do not dispute his passage, but welcome him. The atoms fly to a natural magnet, and cluster in groups, whose order and symmetry proclaim the only relationship that can cohere.

It is necessary to give some definition of the word Individual, that its use may not imply a preference for the traits which keep people separated from each other, in attitudes of defiance or conceit. And it is sometimes assumed by the critics who are hostile to our theory of government, whose ink we generously reinforce with the gall of our ill-natured habit of insisting upon private peculiarities and calling them our rights, that the Republic is nothing but a vast forcing-bed of the defects which training and culture ought to keep suppressed. Hereditary features become exaggerated in a country whose egotism devotes itself to securing them an opportunity. Here, it is said, every thing that is characteristic finds free play and use; and sects of one member each can attribute religiousness to the points in which men differ. "I am as good as you" means that I am born with some darling distinction which I will flatter and sustain; I am an accented syllable which I shall proclaim all alone, and its meaning is that I am emancipated from the servile conformity of old societies: the country is large on

purpose that crowds may fall apart into units, to perceive and cultivate their specialities.

But even this excess of private assertion unconsciously favors spiritual coöperation. When people fall apart as far as possible, and every temperament achieves the most violent emphasis, the triviality of the result is most clearly discerned. It is one of the prime advantages of voluntaryism, though transitional, that it exhausts the human possibilities of dissent. Let it be settled forever how minute and numerous may be the verbal and accidental differences: let them be phrased and stated. As men have come to a mutual understanding that no two people need look alike, that even between twins there reigns some way of distinguishing, so they will acquiesce in the identical manhood beneath their various mental complexions, which fills their veins with one blood of the Spirit, and sends the same flush to all cheeks when beautiful and noble things are seen. That mantling color of health spreads over countless modifications of feature, and men are to each other as mirrors, in which their essential unity appears, to surprise and ravish. They look so handsome to each other that they wonder at their past presumption of unlikenesses, and the reconciling smile goes round. Then individualism rises to personality, and there is an incarnation of divine truth.

“ Mark how one string, sweet husband to another,
Strikes each in each by mutual ordering:
Resembling sire and child and happy mother,
Who all in one, one pleasing note do sing;
Whose speechless song, being many, seeming one,
Sing this to thee — ‘ thou single wilt prove none.’ ”

The individual is sacred by virtue of this organic fellow-feeling that moral and spiritual truth has for itself wherever it can be found. It may go masquerading in all the costumes of all latitudes, with the intent to enjoy clothing suitable to the physical meridian. These and manners are disguises, but the real person delights in the pursuit of himself, and recognizes his essential being however clad. It will be vain for denominations to establish tests of fellowship, as soon as the individuals appreciate that they have been holding each other at arm's-length only as friends do who have been long separated, to study each other with a jealous gaze, and recover through the alienations of time and place the old tokens of affinity.

The unit will perceive that he is sacred in the interest of unity, and not because he happens to be one of many. Merely as one, he is oppressed by his private pretension; his much lauded freedom of being singular becomes a cause of inconvenience to himself and others. Everybody who thinks of fortifying his speciality as an individual, only succeeds in putting himself into a state of siege, till, hunger and thirst growing intolerable, he destroys his own outworks by a successful sortie, and effects a junction with his real self in the open country.

Thus, when we say that the sacredness of the individual is the basis of American Religion, we accept a definition which identifies the person with the elements of religion as it is to be described. This religious identity is the natural affinity which demands and secures the service of each individual for the other, and prompts the sacrifices of the republic.

Such is the law which will eventually rise superior to demagoguism ; to the vulgar ambitions of new rich men, and the selfishness that finds its opportunity only where it can be sure of permanent protection whenever it is organized. But here the individual incessantly opposes the selfishness of the few in order to secure the coöperation of all. For selfishness is a tendency to be regulated since it cannot be extinguished.

So each person says: "I want the minimum of governing and the maximum of welfare ; as little as possible that is official in my politics and my religion. Who shall make up my mind about either but myself? As soon as interference passes the bound of coöperation, I find luggage that belongs to other people fastened to my back. In religion, especially, I can carry all that I have within, for nature has decided that capacity, but not a rag or a scheme brought over from old theological depots of cast off garments. If any worshipping is to be done, let my person, in its integrity of mind and body, be anthem, liturgy, and offering."

We are far enough yet from such a simple adjustment of the soul with the sincerity of things. Voluntaryism is enjoying its fancies and crotchets ; all the sects are sitting apart to examine what the grab-bag has yielded them. But these gifts are very trivial, for theology is a mean provider at its fair ; its object being to raise a good deal of money at a little outlay. So people play awhile with Orthodox, Baptist, and Unitarian dolls : make the eyes roll and the limbs gesticulate. The people who represent individualism soon get tired, petulantly tear the dolls apart, smile at the

sawdust and watch-springs, and throw them into the rubbish. Indeed, all the people suspect that their own souls are contrivances superior to these; and when they are not nursing a doll, you may catch them with their arms full of the glorious babe of humanity, pressing it close to the universal instinct to recognize a Son of God. This rapture passes away; in fact, that babe has heaven in it and weighs somewhat; for daily carrying, a doll may be slung anywhere, while the rest of the man attends to the concerns of his family and town. After all, despotism has a better time in the meeting-houses than it can have along the streets, where any street-organ that touches a heart's tune gathers its crowd of Sunday dissidents, who drop the current coin, and perhaps the tear.

But we ought to emphasize the characteristic into which the efforts of mankind at self-government have been filtered. When it comes to the point in this country, and justice applies her test, the sacredness of the individual is sure to appear. There is not enough tradition left over to smother it. The demagogue may point after great numbers of individuals who are grotesquely clad and favored; as badly bred but not as bitter as himself, — too miserable for that, — as stupid but not as obstinate; as hungry but not as unscrupulous; with skin as dark but not as unwashed. He can whistle a crowd down the street in pursuit of these men, and perhaps persuade it to select some lamp-post to make his Anti-Americanism conspicuous. But the next time those despised and rejected people are seen on the pavement, they are better clad and furnished with ideas, and have a bit of paper in their

hand, the death-sentence of the demagogue. He had sinned against the unwritten law of the land, and now it flames in bright letters along every wall.

If a theologian, wishing to uncoil his paper-barricade of a creed, would have it safe, let him not do it across the road while Liberty is passing to keep her appointment with men. Put fences up in meeting-houses, turn every pew into a pound, but be careful not to block the highway. If a question of the sacredness of the individual arises, the very pew-holders fall into column, and breathe the air of pure and undefiled religion outside. What a pity it is that they ever let themselves be impounded again! *Do* they let their *selves* be impounded? How much of church-going is mere passing by the sexton of suits of clothes to seats? Perhaps the souls exchange winks of recognition.

It will be strange if the popular mind, inheriting a lively distaste for being over-governed and directed, does not also gather from the past a salutary experience of the debilitating effect of mediatorial schemes of religion. They have not only dragooned men into conformity by methods known to despotic states, but have inflicted an injury deeper than any that lurked behind the walls of the inquisition, by teaching the soul to walk with stilts and crutches instead of with its own members. People outgrow Mariolatry, invocation of saints, cringing at the slits of the confessional, but it is at the expense of growing into idolatry for the Bible, and the superstition that a Redeemer assumes the function which his mother and the saints have vacated. The soul is weakened by learning to

lean upon a go-between. It is generally noised about by leading minds that they have tried to obtain divine truth by more independent methods, and have failed. The result of this abject adherence to a single person, or to the narrative of a single life, even in its most liberal form, is to keep up a piety of reminiscence, and throw discredit upon every original mental movement that is urged by modern circumstances. It is in vain that a mediatorial scheme becomes enlightened, as it is called : freed, that is, from notions of an atonement, of some mysterious influence of a sacrifice by death, and of some supernatural element in the person's life and character. Even the miraculous coloring of the narrative is in vain toned down, and held subordinate to its spiritual ideas. The most robust and intelligent worshipper of a dead Master of religious life cannot avoid presuming that he was something exceptional ; the solitary perfection and felicity of human nature, who still exerts a mystic influence upon the soul, and is capable of immediate personal communion with the believer. Hearts that cherish emotions of regret and admiration begin fancying that he still suggests substantial moods, and communicates something from the infinite. Thus superfluous sentiments encumber the nature, amuse and occupy the mind, and finally become subjective habits which are easily mistaken for objective facts, and are of the same flaccid fibre with the dreams and raptures of the mediæval saint. Charity itself becomes an imitation of a person who is supposed to have revealed for the first time how divine it is. There is a soft and delightful playing at beneficence ; it breaks out in vestries

hung with mottoes, where people assemble to enjoy tableaux of religious sociability. It rages at fairs started to buy an organ, carpet the aisles of the Church of the Nativity, stock the library of the Sunday School with razeed novels. And when the brotherhood of man is patronized, it is under the authority of some fraternal sayings of the great-hearted man who was despised by his generation. Every person who longs to be moored and at rest fastens his cable backward to those verbal buoys; every person who sees something to be accomplished runs his band around that distant feeding-wheel of one man's character. The waste of power is great; it is mainly absorbed by holding up this enormous length of reminiscence. The mind imagines that it is engaged in spontaneous and freshly born virtue, when it is only recurring to the tradition of it. This imitation may raise money and produce various social and ecclesiastical effects, but it leaves personal inspiration crippled: the soul is no longer a pioneer but a dependent. The muscles of the individual are deprived of their formidable natural movements by learning this continuous backward gesture; it is finely and gracefully acquired, but at the expense of some stunting to the whole manhood. Only the best conditioned people can do their work handsomely under this drawback.

But they do a very ill service to the average mind of the country, or to those who from mixed motives personally adhere to them, when they infer that their successful struggle with a disadvantage is the natural superiority of their mediating scheme. Even if their morality never degenerated into mimicry, they would

have no case. There is not one theology that is not true to the extent of its ethical ability. Fetichism could have made as large a boast, while preventing it from growing larger. Bad mental method sometimes makes an atheist of a man who can claim all neighborly and admirable qualities: they are the proof of the God whom he imagines he is denying.

Plenty of manly people swear by the stiffest catechisms all life long, who put them into the cupboard if any sudden peril knocks at their door to startle the blood into heroism; and perhaps their dead leaves may be rolled into cartridges for a living flame, as they take the field with men who never saw a catechism, or imagined that they held spiritual life in consequence of a man who died once. The heavy and the light believers use the common cartridge to some purpose before the affair is through. The only mediator in such business is the God-given pluck that forgets every thing but the defence of the new truth that is in danger close at hand.

The most advanced mechanics of liberal religion, observing how men have been retarded by their cumbersome attachments to that distant centre where motive-power is supposed to reside, have invented thinner and lighter bands. Catholic paganism, Orthodox inconsequence, are laid aside. All the rude mediæval methods are discarded by these shifty liberals, who cry from their stand, "Here is a new patent, the latest product of American ingenuity, this flexible yet durable connection with a redeeming person; it only weighs an ounce where the old fabrics weighed a ton, almost thin as gossamer yet tough as steel, this subtly spun

web of intimacy with a great divine Brother, who was no kind of a God at all, far from it, nor any supernatural official ; who worked miracles, to be sure, because he could not help it any more than the birds can help singing, but who never emphasized them offensively, nor used them to sugar coat his truths ; the one divine man who so actually became what is only possible with us, that his actuality introduces our possibility to God : the way, the truth and the life : alive to-day, a personality as large as Christendom, and in close consultation with every point of the surface ; so that men have a medium that was born out of their own human nature, and something of identical texture all the way from earth to heaven is now ready for delivery to parties. How many will your parish take ? Hasten to connect your inner works with this source of movement by slipping on a rational mediator. Price ? Ah — only a pew-tax apiece." It may weigh an ounce where the other methods weighed a ton ; but, unfortunately, ounces in the long run accumulate so frightfully that we begin to doubt the need of deriving our power in this way from a source beyond ourselves. We notice that our other functions do not have to travel so far to be fed. Even if this great Brother, who is alive to-day, be somewhere in this neighborhood, what accommodation can I offer him ? His Father has hired my premises, and would fain occupy all the rooms, from garret to cellar.

We are kept alive upon this spot where we now stand, from this food at our feet and this ambient light and air. There is a power with us, occupying the actual interior of this body, commensurate with a

thousand million similar bodies: there is not the distance of an inch between us and it. Sublimely economical, it makes the body its instantaneous link of communication. Cannot the power which sustains, without budging from the spot, my personal vitality, sustain and nourish the immediate conscience of which that vitality makes me aware? I cannot hurt my health, nor tell a lie, nor commit a fraud, nor strike my brother, nor leave the beggar in the ditch, nor parade my superiorities, without knowing it by direct intimation. My pains are its rebukes, my delights its sympathy, my hopes its suggestions, my sacrifices its impost, my heavenly longings its apology for haunting me forever. There is a Power in which I live and move and have my being, in which I eat, drink, breathe, sleep and wake, love and hate, marry and protect a home. Is it incapable of sustaining all my functions of direct religion on the spot, as well as these? Do I have these without a mediator, and must I travel for the rest? When I undertake to breathe by tradition it will be time for me to get a sense of God in the same way. For, look you, Jesus breathed where he stood. If I cannot breathe where I stand, I cannot do it by standing elsewhere. I am hardly conscious that I draw this morning's air, and sweeten myself clear through with it just where I stand on my two feet, till you insist that I make a great mistake in drawing this air, unmixed, as God brews it over Massachusetts. My lungs have expanded to a calibre that corresponds, and I can take it undiluted; stand up and take it streaming to my nostrils and my lips.

No plan for furnishing mediatorial power can sur-

vive this test of private experience. The Nile is only a geographical fact to the miller who finds a stream upon his own grounds that is able to turn his wheel. He delights more in that than in reports concerning the freshet that makes the distant desert blossom. And a stream may still roll on between the shattered hints of its old civilization, without long moving the regrets of men who build by new streams the monuments of Nature's unchangeable resources.

This private experience must be quite general, or it fails in something that is important to its authority. We would say, it must be universal, if ignorance and passion had not taught us that there are misfortunes of birth and bringing up; these distort and obscure the original intention of conscience. A great many cases are then commended to the prevailing sense for justice and humanity. But if it prevails enough to secure a country where the individual, notwithstanding moral feebleness and a sluggish intuitive perception, is still considered sacred, it is universal enough to show that moral strength and intuition are born upon the spot, for immediate consumption, and not derived through the delay and wastage of importation from foreign lands.

As soon as this general conscience is applied to the cases of hereditary obliquity, to the victims of oppression and neglect, and to the dangerous people, they also betray a relationship to the universal soul; so that, at length, no sanitary method is safe or prosperous which does not begin by assuming that God is healthy just behind its subjects also, in spite of appearances, and that their health, if gained at all, must be gained

through their direct communion with Him. We may appeal to them with traditional phrases, but our genuine appeal is in the instant's fraternity that startles a slumbering family feeling; it is something in the method that labors with them that takes their sonship for granted; it is the latest common sense that consults the latest knowledge in the interest of this sacredness, puts science in the place of sentiment, and sets a living Commonwealth to restore them to their spiritual rights. And no name less venerable than the name of God need be spoken during this vindication of God's presence: nor that either so long as it is vindicated.

In this way private experience discovers the organic laws that sustain the human reason, or minister to its restoration when it has become impaired.

Organic laws do not deal in superfluities. They enlarge all things to their true nature by stripping them of the incumbrances of methods that were generated by phrases. At first, when these mufflers are taken off, the size of manhood seems diminished. But it has laid aside the aspect that was only imposing to childish eyes, to assume compact, clean and virile proportions. Then men perceive that a well-trained strength either threatens or invites them, as they please.

When ancient investigation consented to put up with phrases, the development of science was arrested, not to be resumed till natural forces were substituted for verbal ingenuity. Thus, when Pythagoras said that Number was the cause of all created things, he vaguely implied the modern discoveries of the numerical ratios that exist in astronomy, chemistry, harmony, indeed,

wherever material elements betray the existence of Force ; but instead of becoming acquainted with force or motion, he lingered speculating with the conception of Number, and then his discoveries were mainly accidents. So when Aristotle explained the weight and the falling of bodies by the notion that some things must be absolutely light, and some absolutely heavy, gravitation had to wait for a Newton to discard the empty phrases, and discover the natural energy which held him bound to one spot as he went spinning with a central force, in balanced harmony with all the worlds.

So theology has been working at the notion that the individual conscience subsists in consequence of a Book, and rotates around that, or is first stimulated into action by it ; that its authority is a page of print ; that it is developed, or redeemed, by the life or the death of one person therein narrated. These phrases disappear as soon as the individual discovers that his soul defers to organic truth as his body defers to gravitation. Both are on the spot ; natural directions of forces which are displayed through him. How he sheds doctrinal superfluities, as he does the despotic interferences with politics, trade and family life, which assume his incapacity for self-government !

In this way, by long living upon the earth, Religion has learned to divest itself of every thing that is not essential to its life. By successions of battles and marches mankind has found out just what it ought to carry : the minimum of weight with the maximum of effectiveness. With less, there may be famine ; with more, weakness, confusion, fatal incumbrance at the moment of attack. Religion finds that it can subsist

very well upon the spiritual reliances which are the result of the organic laws of the individual. It asks no more than the rest of the world: to know and understand its reason for being. Every branch of knowledge begins, simultaneously with the natural gesture of the soul, to turn interlopers out of doors, and write above, No admittance except on business.

Then Religion must rely, first, upon the individual, who is the medium between knowledge and action, between the finite and the infinite. The past reaches the present in him: the present proceeds to a future, the invisible becomes incarnated in him. There is in fact nothing outside of the Individual. If any effect of past living fails to extend as far as his own being, it was really no effect at all. To be sure, he cannot be conscious of the whole modification which has resulted from the fact that other people lived previous to him; but, so far as he is concerned, the past is the extent to which *he* has been modified. And there is practically as much God as he contains: he is an outline on the infinite. What is beyond does not exist vitally for him, but only as stellar spaces exist, which he may surmise to be peopled or unpeopled, to be within or outside of the solar system; but he is not consciously implicated. He need not be aware of the extent to which he is modified by the Divine presence, but, in reality, all the rest of God is absent. The creative mind, in choosing to occupy the organizations it has conceived, has limited the knowledge of Himself to each and all. Also, the individual limits the existence of the world by his perceptions of it. There is nothing beyond the phenomena which he embraces and apprehends. It is true, he

cannot detect many influences of nature which rush to him as to a point of attraction; but while they temper him they cannot surpass his extent of entertaining them. For him, there is no weather, nor landscape, nor revolving year beyond his physical and mental range. He creates the world which he inhabits. All the rest is no concern of his.

There is a sense in which Religion appears to be co-extensive with the contents of the individual; for he is sacred. No peculiar sanctity invests any one part or tendency. Nothing short of the whole of him can be a divine image, an expression of the amount of Life that is arrested by him. There is no schism in the members: he is all honorable from crown to feet, and whatever transpires beneath the roof which body and soul build for mutual convenience, whatever is secreted from the world by his minutest pore, becomes in him an acknowledgment of God. As soon as beauty of scenes and sounds are entangled in his network of nerves they fall to his hunger for beauty that is yet to be attained. The taste that trembles on his tongue in a moment of satisfaction, the fact that conspires with him to be accounted for, and the use he finds for every thing, become his reception of divine revelation, even if no phrases of adoration pass his lips.

But if they are sung by the harmony of all created things, as they muster to his organs to find in them an orchestra to express their joy, they too are a part of his personal religion. This can only occur in fortunate moments, when confluent streams of life announce themselves, or natural gladness hurries up the stairs of rhythm to an interview with God, or when terror and

beauty break awe-stricken into the soul. But these moments cannot be imitated, nor stereotyped for use in meeting-houses. There is a singing-bird that would pine in the cage of a liturgy, one that seldom alights on the limed twig of stated prayer. Yet the hunt is kept up the most vigorously in districts where the game is scarcest. Is it worth while?

It is better to find that Religion performs her state-liest worship when she feels herself liberated in the sacredness of the individual, and put to her uses.

She must rely, then, upon what he contains. It follows that there can be no test or basis of certitude outside of himself, in matters of the moral and spiritual life. His attainment is the last court of appeal. It is so wherever he attains to positive facts and information in any department; but in every other one excepting morals and his sense of God, he can rely upon external authority. He is obliged to take the antipodes for granted, and is willing to let Herschel tell him what the nebula contains. If he cannot lead Darwin and Agassiz, he follows gratefully, and gleans as much of the universe as his mind can hold. He descends a shaft with faith in the safety-lamp which some one puts into his hand, and he borrows a telescope to set in order those choirs of "young-eyed cherubim" who crowd the night. Wherever he cannot go in person, he risks going by proxy, even when his safety and health are involved; and he has made so many experiments of this kind that he finds trust to be an economy. The bee hives honey more compactly than he can, and the surgeon ties an artery so that the life is stayed.

But even of trust he is the sole criterion; for it is the

result of his personal experience. If he trusts another person, it must be on some good ground discovered by himself. He may or may not consider mere relationship a sufficient ground, but whatever gains his consideration becomes his sole criterion.

In moral and spiritual truth no relationship suffices, no traveller can report any news. He meets all the Marco Polos half way with a tale as sumptuous, as strange and true. The plain Yea and Nay are both hemispheres settled by him when he came into the world. He took possession in the name of the original proprietor, who sent him out to colonize and improve. And now shall anybody undertake to sell him his own food and spices, raised for home consumption on his own farm, and the fabrics which he spins against the weather?

He finds the wild crab of sincerity, and improves it to a staple fruit. It is the tree of knowledge standing in the middle of his garden. His eyes are opened. The true and the false, the pure and the impure, the straight and the crooked, the just and the unjust, the tender and the harsh, all clean and unclean things are named by him as they defile.

He can beg or borrow other kinds of knowledge, but nothing short of the man himself can purchase a beatitude. How plain this ought to be to the emaciated crowds who watch some pool's mouth to move for them. They cannot step into a text for healing. Health is theirs for the choosing, but if they choose a text, the virtue still remains outside.

It is plain that somebody has been so certain of truth that a text transpired in consequence. But if another

person thinks to pick up moral certitude with the text that lies before him, he will vainly peel its shadow from the ground. He cannot even be certain that another one was certain; but only certain that he thought he was. For all texts are merely assumptions of past certainties, till the moment when they become superfluous; and that is when the eternal certitude repeats itself in the individual. For it is the evolution of personal life, and not the attainment of a fact, thought or feeling.

Every individual inherits a certain amount of moral culture, and if he comes into life by fortunate descent he may begin where centuries leave off. But he does not begin until the new circumstances force him into independence, whither he betakes himself with all his heir-looms. Previous to that, perhaps, he nurses himself in the family chair and reads over the ancient will. That is not virtue, but a branch of archæology.

Boys and girls come to Sunday Schools prepared to repeat chapters of holy writ, by which it is expected that manhood and womanhood will be inculcated. Can they ever be in that way? There was a time when the Republic grew heroic without such mechanism. Names of superior dignity in all nations ought to suggest to us that virtue is extorted by the business of the week. A vague sentiment of respect towards the record of past greatness cannot convince a living soul that it is criterion and source of greatness yet to come. That secret lies in Monday, when fidelity is exacted, and the invisible record picks up the homeliest blocks to spell itself legibly all along the week, before the

impertinent catechism claims memory again, and puts the living Gospel by.

Does anybody deny the existence of this invisible record? Whence, then, came the written one? Truly it seems as if we thought that earth achieved nothing till it had been written down. Millions of divine incarnations do not succeed in achieving so much as an epitaph. But the family brain-cells frame some fit acknowledgment.

“Do thy good in love of goodness purely!
That commit to every vein;
Through the children if it runneth poorly,
For some grandchild 'twill remain.”

We suspect that we can be deluged with stories of brave men who remembered appropriate texts in critical moments, out of Homer, from all poets to the Bible, and thence to the latest lyric which some deed inspired. Men are simple enough to declare sometimes that the words which fitted like a rhyme to their action were its parent and supporter. A more rational explanation shifts the paternity to the action. The words came thronging into the inspiration which had already approached and thrown wide open the doors of life. The dull text glowed as the thrilling moment found it in the way. Before one has time to remember “It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God,” the temptation must have lost its power. Else how abandoned to inexplicable wrath must the men and women have been who had to find their way into brave living before Moses was set adrift in the papyrus, or any man had borrowed the reed to record one natural commandment.

“Let us consider,” says Mr. Newman, the English Catholic, “how differently young and old are affected by the words of some classic author, such as Homer or Horace. Passages, which to a boy are but rhetorical commonplaces, neither better nor worse than a hundred others which any clever writer might supply, which he gets by heart and thinks very fine, and imitates, as he thinks, successfully, in his own flowing versification, at length come home to him, when long years have passed, and he has had experience of life, and pierce him, as if he had never before known them, with their sad earnestness and vivid exactness. Then he comes to understand how it is that lines, the birth of some chance morning or evening at an Ionian festival, or among the Sabine hills, have lasted generation after generation, for thousands of years, with a power over the mind, and a charm, which the current literature of his own day, with all its obvious advantages, is utterly unable to rival.’ Perhaps this is the reason of the mediæval opinion about Virgil, as if a prophet or magician; his single words and phrases, his pathetic half lines, giving utterance, as the voice of Nature herself, to that pain and weariness, yet hope of better things, which is the experience of her children in every time.” *

This is an excellent statement of the reflex action of personal experience upon sacred books. In the revelation of life men gather maturity of thought and depth of emotion. Riveted to the spot of their destiny they stand, while the day turns for them the pages of a

* Grammar of Assent: page 76, Am. Ed.

book, and lets the light fall upon the texts of joy, terror and pity; the sudden claim of brotherhood, the warning of a vitiated temper, the exigencies of love and duty, flash out of moments of living, like electric sparks, into the soul, and find their equilibrium in personal conviction. Then new sentences might replace the old ones that sprung from the sincerity of similar moments. But if the old ones are met by the soul, as it travels with a fresh morning behind it, the light that falls upon their faces thrills and surprises, and it runs forward to greet them. Certainly, they must be members of its family, whose absence it had not noted; kindred, at least, who left the old homestead before they grew familiar.

When Scriptures glow, it is with the same life that gave them birth: they are indebted to us, not we to them. Virgil is not alone in profiting by the success of these magical moments; they promote all their kindred apostles to the assumption of possessing extraordinary qualities.

But Scriptures share this advantage with every object of nature and art that receives the tardy investiture of our own beauty or grandeur. When we have an eye for a landscape, there is one: previously, we notice without emotion an assemblage of stones and trees. If Orpheus sits in the midst, they come to listen with attitudes and relations grouped around the vibrations of his lyre.

Our sum of vitality creates the quality of terror as well as of delight. The child walks unconsciously as a somnambulist around the parapet, while the mother clings to every movement, pale and speechless

as Athens expecting the cry of Agamemnon's murder. Our perception of the most trivial thing is just as deep as we are.

Nature holds an open book, and invites us all to try her *sortes*, and many a comforting coincidence is found. But when the spider swings for the third time, and fastens the thread of his little homily to the wall, the bolder heart of a Bruce must be at hand to turn it into songful deeds.

It is pertinent to ask if this private consciousness of a criterion of truth has been waiting till America furnished its social and political opportunity. The theologian objects that an organic law of the individual ought always to have been as peremptory as seeing and hearing, both of which men have done for themselves from the beginning. Hardly: we still see with others' eyes, and it is an American failing to hear by one vast organ, called popular opinion, whose tympanum is vigorously beaten by fetich-masters of all creeds. But the objector forgets how much more rapidly bodies have developed than souls; and Nature has served the inner senses latest of all her guests. Their scramble for food began at the mouth. Not till that is fully occupied do higher cravings vex mankind in moments of leisure from hunger.

Men will not seek and appropriate truths till they are felt to be worth the while; especially if they have not yet been brought within the daily necessities. They may belong to the soul by inherent right and constitution, still they will remain only a latent tendency, and seem as strange as foreign products, till a demand for them springs up. While men can get

along pretty well without, no trouble will be taken to seek and to procure them. But as soon as by chance, or by the reiterated assurances of some soul who makes the planet and the year adventurous, or by the pressure exercised by accumulating knowledge and perceptions of life, men begin to feel that they can be enriched, greatly improved in comfort, simplified in living, by these far things, they are discovered to be near and accessible. The distance was nothing but disuse.

In the beginning of this century, Humboldt carried to Europe the first specimens of Peruvian guano, with accounts of the profits derived from its use by the natives of Peru and China. But the industrial world waited thirty years, supinely indifferent; till at length a few essays of the new fertilizer were made, followed by another interim of neglect which lasted ten years. Then suddenly 433 vessels carried it to every quarter of the globe. In the next year twenty-six million dollars worth of it was transported, and three hundred million dollars worth of it during the first twenty years of the traffic.

The so called "Mammoth-Coasts" of Siberia retain, with a grasp of iron, deposits of ivory which were known to Pliny and Theophrastus, but which came into use only about two hundred years ago, and have furnished, since that beginning, scarcely 40,000 pounds of ivory a year: not enough to help the children of a single country cut their teeth. Yet a fresh island, or an unexplored stretch of coast, yields new quarries of the durable material, and becomes an enamelled invitation to mankind to come and help itself, for it is

inexhaustible. It is said that a solitary ivory hunter can procure 20,000 pounds of it in a year.

Truths do not create new wants, but provide more portable and exact methods of meeting the old ones.

Such a truth, for homeliness, practicality, daily convenience for use and beauty, is the absolute independence and authority of the conscience. One would think it must have been self-evident from the beginning, if it were really embedded in the primitive substance of the soul. But generations must develop it into working consciousness. It is not enough that a few explorers make it known. Their recommendation is not heeded, while the majority get along pretty well upon the authority of books, texts and codes of manners, results of successive stages of this very independence of moral and spiritual insight. The grand gesture is not yet freed into the daily life. As soon as men begin to use their new advantages, they wonder how life was carried on without them, and cannot be induced to recur to the old methods, because it is now plain how much slaving and wasting they involved. Coal, steam, the magnetic circuit, all primitive possibilities, are in the world and in the soul, lying all ready to be used, disturbing men for centuries with unquiet dreams in which they hear the vague, tumultuous cry, "Come, use me." By and by the souls wake up, and say gladly, "Come, be used."

Propositions that are styled self-evident, like the "blazing ubiquities" of the Declaration of Independence, are not so till they become evident to ourselves. But then they exist nowhere else. Previous to that, we may accede to them as abstractions, but they are

not evident till they become essential to our life and happiness. The beatitudes are as distant as the guano islands, as superfluous as the whiteness of a buried tusk, till the day's comfort calls for them. Then we justify them, and become in person the only authorization they can ever acquire. Before that, miracles could not annex them to our life, or be their guarantee.

Bodies of the ancient Egyptians, that were dipped in natron till they became mummified, are thrust by modern stokers underneath the boilers that ply along the Nile. The brains are out of these dead texts with which the Copt gets up his steam. Our Scripture compends and catechisms might also be of some use upon the rail, if they made up in bitumen for their lack of vitality.

This original position of the individual cannot exempt him from the advantages of being cultivated any more than it can detach him from the past. His soul had ancestors who were not of his family connection, and by enlarging his acquaintance with them he restores them to the family line. But the characters in Plutarch and in the Bible do not surrender to him their trophies: at the most, they can only count upon depriving him of sleep.

“ Care not to strip the dead
Of his sad ornament, —
His myrrh, and wine, and rings,
His sheet of lead,
And trophies buried :
Go, get them where he earned them when alive ;
As resolutely dig or dive.”

This is the lesson of every Bible. If any other is forced upon it, the individual has to be defrauded for this spurious aggrandizement of a book. It stands in the line of every man's culture to surrender to him all private claims of excellence as fast as he detects them: they are jewels that belong to his modern housekeeping, and the servant cannot be above his lord to retain them.

If the sacred books do not urge a man to instant flight on pain of being enslaved, they do not serve him. "Fly!" cries the beauty at the postern, "I hear the steps at hand—I would not have even thee my captive. In some distant land rescue thyself and find me." He tears himself away from this celebrated reality, and flies from the door that opens into the unknown night, pursued by the garden perfumes that cling and flatter, almost too persuasive against the thrilling touch of obstacles and the stir of a coming dawn, by whose light he finds his way into the arms of his Ideal, and clasps life instead of narrative. He generously acknowledges whatever means for prosecuting this journey he has borrowed from the past, be it but a gourd of water and a crust in his pocket. But no gratitude can make him stay; no refreshment win him to dependence; no lingering, delightful memories unfasten his exploring gear, and soothe him in the old lap beneath the palms. As he shoulders manfully through the dense undergrowth of new conditions, he takes up the old refrain of sacred independence, the only bit of the great song that stays by him: "Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of olden time—but *I* say unto thee." *I!* who is this *I*?

Not upstart John or James, but every man's Person, old as God, and therefore young forever.

This I is the sacred individual who makes implied truths explicit, and finds the virtues and politics of the *New Testament* waiting for him on the spot. But whether he becomes a great man, or is formidable only within the concrete of insignificance, God cannot serve him except with the old Spirit that served all sacred men. So close is He, that there is nothing new. Shall we hear conservatives and antiquarians prate of the reverence due to age?

America shall yet learn to pay to great men the purest reverence that the world has seen, by denying their official mediatorship and restoring them to the privileges of the human Ideal. Every pedestal will become vacant, and a pavement of equal hearts will vibrate with the steps of poetry, art, and conscience.

The great spiritual men of all times and races differ as the water-sheds of earth do, in outline and flora. Between the meadow's smile and the austere summit, various contrasted meridians lie stretched along the ample slopes and emerge from the many-fashioned chasms. But the sky around and above holds in solution one unchangeable vapor which they condense and transmit. And people must learn to use the water of their locality for their daily needs, just where they live. The day passes while they run with pails to various springs of hearsay. Abana and Pharpar are as good as the Jordan to those who are not upon the Jordan's banks, and quite as cleansing. It would be very simple to waste time in venerating tourists, and the specimens of sacred waters which they bring

home. Even the charm of distance adheres to the brook that skirts your field, for loudly as any traveller it prattles of the far zone where the sun's ray drew it into the wind's circuit to have it deposited upon Wachusett or Meeting-House Hill.

IV.

THE DIVINE IMMANENCE.

THE word Immanence, equivalent to In-being, is more convenient than Inspiration to express the coöperation of a divine force with all the structures of the universe, and with the conscience of the individual. It is more exact, because it implies an unbroken continuity of Presence. First, we claim its universality in man, as preliminary to a discussion of its law.

The Eastern Convent of Sittna receives, at a certain season of the year, a stream of pilgrims, drawn from all quarters by the attraction of a mysterious chamber. It is a room, one wall of which is the outer wall of the convent, with a high domed ceiling, and destitute of windows. A single narrow slit admits a beam of light which slants upon the ceiling, and faintly flickers there with the movements of the people and things which happen to be outside. The special religious observance for which this convent is famous consists in packing this room with successive relays of the pilgrims, who do nothing but watch the ceiling. The darkness is almost total, the heat prodigious, the fragrance hardly worth speaking of. The unwashed devotees crowd and hustle each other, and give vent to excited cries as

often as a shadow flits across the ceiling. That is the miracle for which they are waiting. The angle that is made by the slit is concealed by priestly ingenuity, and the ignorant gazers have been taught for centuries to suppose that the sudden and elusive movements on the ceiling are supernatural gestures of a divine power. All that they can learn about the invisible comes shifting through that slit: a small allowance, but perhaps as much as any minds can receive which have not been nurtured in the light. Wherever the theory of religion is that God likes to creep into a dark room through a crevice, the mental calibre will correspond. Substitute for this the true theory that God is the light, the weather, the sun and rain, the men and women, and all the animated open country, you need not expect to recruit believers out of the dark chamber. When a man takes a great deal of trouble and travels many miles in order to suffocate in a close and fetid space, you must wait till the effect becomes insupportable to human nature, which by that time may be willing to use the eyes, the ears and the lungs that God has given to it.

I presume that the most popular crevice, towards which the greatest number of sincere human beings is struggling to get a glimpse of God, is the doctrine that He has moments of special inspiration, and has always preferred to manifest himself at intervals, to speak with isolated authority through a church, a tradition, a book, an occasional prophet, an exceptional circumstance, a particular providence. What a mob of every generation rushes out of the universe, where there is free play for every limb and sense, and jams itself into this close and covered passage, till the pressure becomes

so great that the whole mass of living beings stands packed, and hardly one has a chance to break loose and discover that the passage leads nowhere, in fact, stops abruptly at a dead wall. The ingenuity that is wasted, by guides and teachers, to make this doctrine plausible, and to repair the damages done from time to time by pure investigation, reminds me of the strata-gems of the Africans when they meditate a grand battue of wild animals. Two lines are made, a mile or more in length, frank and open enough at one end, but gradually converging into a palisaded paddock with a pit; these lines are fortified with interlacing branches, fallen trees and brushwood, so that it would be difficult to find or force a gap. When the whole arrangement is as involved and bristling as a theological argument, the driving begins. The natives, scattered over the country, beat every grove and thicket, and slowly force the roused animals towards the tunnel. There is a howling native watching at every weak point of the line, as the mingled horde comes trampling and rushing in. Cunning and strength will not avail, natural reluctance at being impounded yields to pressure. The silly giraffe, the shy antelope, the doubling stag, the sagacious elephant, all go over together into a promiscuous heap of misplaced confidence. By the time the elephant has discovered that he would have consulted his welfare better by remaining in the open country, it is too late to return there. So do many excellent intelligences impress us as being victims of well prepared doctrinal devices, and to be much larger by nature than the place into which they have been driven or insensibly beguiled.

Consider how it must narrow and hamper a mind to grow up with, or to have forced upon it, the notion that the Infinite Soul is listening, or waiting, or delivering himself, at a few crevices, before which humanity must assemble. The common education of the people, in all classes, lecture-rooms and pulpits, ought to throw wide open the idea that God is equivalent to the whole of Life, the whole of History, the whole of Science and Religion; that he is an immeasurable Presence, holding the roots of every sweet or noxious thing, with a growth that has an immense range from the violet to the Mariposa cedar, and an immediate purpose in the nettle, the white-weed, the hay and corn, the orchard and the vine; that men too, like his other growths, exist from his immediate intentions, and that every temper sounds a note in the swelling harmony, while every soul is visited by the daily tides of his Moral Law. Mankind is like a coast, say the Atlantic, whose beaches and indentations and shallow creeks, and Bays of Fundy with deep and sudden influxes of ocean, measure altogether many thousands of miles, every inch of which is visited by the same element that rolls and whitens at the foot of cliffs, and overruns the sand bars; and there is not the smallest pebble which does not chime with the hugest boulder in delivering that sound, when waters reach them, which the sailors call the rote of the shore. It makes an unbroken murmur, in various keys, from the Grand Menan to the coral reefs of Florida. And the history of mankind is like it, a continuous sounding of the ripples of the divine presence, all of it sacred, none of it profane. When the tide is out, there is still depth enough for the whaler

to pursue his prey, and for the whale to gather his ; in the meantime, the sand-piper goes balancing after the worms in the low banks, the heron stands knee-deep in the warm shallows, waiting for his fish, and the eagle does not float so high that he cannot see the turning of a fin in the sunlight. Boys and men on the rocks throw baits to the great element, and gather perhaps more by the eye and the soul than their slender hooks could ever land. Thus all is feeding and all is fed : all is serviceable, and all performs its service. And the heart of God beats in the slender pulsation of the jelly-fish, and in the child's imagination who turns it over with a stick and wonders why it was made. Thus it has been from the beginning : Life itself an unbroken book of Revelation, whose age may be counted by millions of years, and cannot be forced into the legs and arms of our short, threadbare chronology ; a Life of unceasing giving and receiving, wonder and satisfaction, partial discomforts and complete delights, secrets that remain inscrutable long enough to compel solution, problems of human destiny and of the divine will that are continually betraying the intellect into the discovery that nothing is special, nothing exceptional, nothing common or unclean. God himself, year in and year out, is so religious in that infinite and complex appearance called the universe, so incessantly in earnest, never absent, never nodding, always throbbing with a purpose, so consistent too, and uniform in every action that he undertakes, always using the same elements over and over again in nature, and always appealing to man through the moral senses that are the same yesterday, to-day and forever, that it is impossi-

ble for us to put our finger on a moment of the whole and say, Here was God manifest, and on another and say, Here he was not so manifest, since it is all manifestation, a vesture woven without seam from top to bottom, stretching from trilobite to prophet, farther than that even, from the first movement that made a separation into worlds and sky, to the last impulse that some heavenly soul had to select a divine purpose, and live or die by it.

It is true that for convenience of reference we divide the doings of a creative mind into different provinces and studies. We try to observe what its method is in making the soil, the diamond, the metal, the gas ; what relation exists between the elements and forces of nature ; how history has been modified by the characteristics of different tribes of people, and by what law human intelligence has become developed. We see that the mind itself is capable of very dissimilar operations : one man invents a steam-plough, or a cotton-gin, another composes a poem or a symphony. One writes a lyric like the Marseillaise, that runs into the blood of nations, like drum-beats, to climb in the flush of patriotism to the cheek ; another soul breathes the Psalm of filial confidence, and wakes our own if it sleeps, a mother's hand to us in the morning. And another pours out God's own indignation at superstitions, idolatries, wickedness in high places ; he prophesies that a better time is coming, and bids men clear the way. Many men have had nothing but their blood to give, — no song, no chapter, no invention. Nero caught some Christians, and, after swathing them in tarred cotton, set them on fire to light his garden during a feast.

The illumination went farther than his garden. God never yet kindled a fagot, and made a costly lamp of a man, to prolong epochs of darkness. His purpose is light, and that interprets all his acts. But when Kepler travailed in the silent midnight to bring the law of the planetary distances into the world, he was as near to God as John Huss or John Brown. The agonies of faithful souls are God's successes: all inventors who starved before their names became sweet morsels in men's mouths, all unknown singers of dear songs, all women who have played at Providence, all deaths that have been births, all crosses that have lifted up advantages and excellences, have been sacred, none special and exceptional, none of them profane. God's Eternal Power and Godhead are clearly understood by all the things that ever have been made.

And we are discovering every day that the things which are made or done, notwithstanding the diversity that ranges through all natural appearances and human action, have a closer relationship than we suspected. Is light one definite thing, is heat another thing distinct from light, is electricity another, and magnetism still one more? We have already got far on the road to showing that all these are only modes or manifestations of motion. How much more will be included? Will the obscure processes that now figure under the phrases "nervous fluid," "vital force," "cerebral action," be included in this simplification? We cannot tell; but the whole tendency is to trace all manifestations of force towards some central agency, and to accumulate the proofs of the divine unity.

So there does not appear, at first, to be any relation-

ship between the mental process that utilizes filth of cities or the waste of factories, to turn refuse into wheat-fields, to get more heat out of coke, and color out of coal-tar, and work out of the surplus steam, and that which economizes a kingdom's expenditure of time and money, teaches deaf-mutes to communicate ideas, reforms a criminal and adds him to society, provides checks for infanticide, opens asylums to stop the moral rot in outcast women, and gathers up, in short, every fragment of virtue and labor that used to be carried off and wasted through the common sewer. The moral sense is at the bottom of all these processes: a reluctance to see either steam or human beings used extravagantly; an instinct for saving, applied to different products. And this economy pays back to a country's vital unity what it drew in the shape of conscience to carry on its operations.

There is, of course, a vast difference between a spinning-jenny and an overworked and underfed seamstress: the one is improved to save mechanical power, the condition of the other is ameliorated to preserve an immortal element. So a greater number of human feelings become implicated in the efforts to save it: personal sympathy is excited, indignation at the tyranny of low employers, and reverence for womanhood. But, after all, the root of both economies is in the simple moral calculation, and the reluctance of the conscience to see any thing run to waste. This moral feeling may be very low in a number of people who, by temperament, abound in sympathetic impulses: their eyes will run to pity, but their hands will not bestir themselves. So that a less impressible person,

with a clearer sense of justice and proportion, will be coldly working at the generous tasks which they neglect. A moral fitness, therefore, is the ground of relationship between all improvements of the physical and spiritual nature, and the reason, too, why so many moral dangers are averted by providing, first, clothes for the back, to keep out the weather, and bread for the mouth, to create a genial zone within. All things depend so strictly on each other, because they come together in the unity of God.

How is it when we enter other provinces of human thought and feeling in the company of poets, thinkers, and artists? Here at first it seems as if we could recognize some essential traits of divine inspiration, that set these men apart as special messengers to the race, isolated by their gift from common humanity, and organized to be peculiar mouth-pieces of God. The Scotch peasant who drives his plough through a tuft of daisy, or dislodges the mouse from his meadow-nest, sees what Burns saw, but the seeing cannot become song. He can only go on ploughing, we say. But he can do more than that: he can love the song; his heart welcomed it as soon as it was sung, and treasured it. It became a thing of joy forever. As often as he ploughs up daisies, or disturbs the field-mice, or wakes to new labor at morning, underneath the "lingering star with lessening ray" that trembles with the thoughts of Mary in Heaven, he vindicates his companionship with the poet, and exercises an essential element of genius. Conception itself has its root in appreciation, and springs from the audience which it addresses; the common earth contributes the

qualities that are transmuted into the graceful lily and the stately tree. And human nature asserts the unity of all divine immanence, when it pays the tribute of the feelings which the poet claims. For the soul is not merely a string that vibrates to the touch of the musician, and would be mute until he came. But he is latent in all souls, otherwise there would be no ears to receive his revelation.

What is fame but a famous element recognizing itself: the ordinary man pays homage to himself full-grown. Nothing in this world would be produced, if there were nothing that could receive. We have the habit to call the creative element an active one, and the receptive element a passive one; but both, in fact, are reproductive. Love sings the song which love appreciates and absorbs. One is not positive and one negative, but the concurrence of both gives birth to every excellent and noble thing; and I think that the gift of appreciation is as divine as the distinction of being appreciated. When God's unity passes through the atmosphere of Time and Space, it becomes separated into these two attributes which are continually yearning for a perfect marriage, to return to the felicity of their original condition. The audiences at the Globe and Blackfriars' Theatres, of London, in the reign of Elizabeth, were bone and muscle of Shakspeare. They twain became one flesh in the laughters that recognized the human kind in Falstaff, and the tears that dropped those precious ballots to elect the fidelity of Cordelia and the woe of Constance. Shakspeare was alive as long as he fed upon the English nature; the same in Athens, London, and Boston, yesterday and forever, the

perpetual emphasis and reiteration of a divine motive in the hearts of men and women. God has only half a rapture when his gifted children apprehend and set forth the subtle analogies of wit and imagination; they are barren till all his other children, who are gifted to plight troth to them, love, honor, and obey. Then the manifestation of genius is complete, and He knows the ecstasy of Creativeness. The result declares plainly that the Infinite could not have remained alone, in some aboriginal condition of unemanated Spirit. He was solitary, he longed to set himself in families. And we, by virtue of the same intention, are members of the family of Shakspeare, Beethoven, Raphael, Dante, Burns, to whom we give as much as we receive.

“Always when an art predominates,” says Henri Taine, “the contemporary mind contains its essential elements; whether, as in the arts of poetry and music, these consist of ideas or of sentiments; or, as in sculpture and painting, they consist of colors or of forms. Everywhere art and intelligence encounter each other, and this is why the first expresses the second, and the second produces the first.”

What an admirably pregnant little sentence is the old Latin “*Laus est publica*,” that is, glory is public property: a famous man can only take stock with his admirers, and the interest is paid to all.

Let this uniformity of creative elements be illustrated from another quarter.

How Venus and Jupiter sparkle in the cloudless sky, so remote, lifted out of the reach of every thing but fancy, and set apart to be beautiful, in a kind of maidenly reserve that penetrates and surprises. They are

other worlds, but are they not also different ones? We can hardly believe that they have any thing in common with this clod of an earth, whose March mud and July dust and January snow-drifts seem scarcely capable of transmitting into space a ray serene. Yet we have discovered, by the application of analysis to the stellar spectrum, that every sparkle in the nightly sky announces the existence of a ball of dirt, constituted, in all essential elements, like our own; that the solar atmosphere itself yields the traces of metals that are only lying cold and unfused at home here, and that the most distant star in the constellation of Orion sends down to us the report that it is made like all the rest, whose splendors and whose tints are various, while all their grounds are the same. The physical elements exist in different combinations, as they flame upon all these hearthstones of God; but the Sun has no fuel that the earth cannot supply, and Sirius and Jupiter cannot impose upon us with their airs of superiority. There are nickel, iron, and sulphur in the dazzle of the meteor: it charms and then drops to the bosom of an earth that is like itself. For the cause of sameness throughout all diversities is the Unity of God.

Thus it has been found that the sun's atmosphere holds the vapors of copper, iron, zinc, nickel, sodium, and some others, and certain dark lines are ascribed to hydrogen. The fixed star Sirius, another sun, has an atmosphere which betrays the presence of iron, sodium, magnesium and hydrogen. Another fixed star adds calcium and bismuth; another supplements these metals with tellurium, antimony and mercury.

So that there appears to be a variety in the physical constitution of fixed stars and planets, but all of their elements are already known to the Earth, and exist only in different combinations at these different places of the universe. The spectral analysis has not yet penetrated far enough into the secrets of space to reveal an element that is not already in the body of the earth itself. Should it ever do so, it will be a hint to subject our planet to a closer scrutiny. The varying colors of the stars are either due to these particular combinations, or to the varieties of stellar motions; but color is the planet's masquerade. Analysis bids them lift their hues, and numerous earths are discovered waltzing in the cosmic order.

And when we enter the region of ideas that are reigned over by the Moral Law, we find the same identity prevailing through all people, all periods of history, all sacred books, and the whole body of spiritual literature. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable, say some. Others prefer to read the text thus: all Scripture that is given by inspiration of God is profitable. But what is the difference? There can be no profitable Scripture without God: and all that is profitable, wherever you may find it, under whatever strangeness of language, guise and phrase, must have been inspired, if any such trains of spiritual thinking are. When Socrates says, "I pray thee, O God, that I may be beautiful within," and David says, "Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me," and Jesus says, "Blessed are the pure in heart," what is the difference? The essential element is the same in all.

When the old Hindoo declares, a thousand years before Christ, that he who gives alms goes and stands on the highest place in heaven, and that the kind mortal is greater than the great in heaven, we recognize the quarry out of which came Christian philanthropy. God is that quarry : how old it is ; how long it has supplied the world with spotless marbles ! “ Do good, hoping for nothing in return, and ye shall be the children of the highest.” God found no difficulty in transmitting the golden rule by monosyllables of the Chinese sages : it was done through the same channel of the moral sense that received it.

There was a Syrian slave whose life in Rome began with the Christian era ; and while Jesus was preaching love to man in the villages of Judea, the heart of Publius Syrus was found large enough to contain the same doctrine of the Father. “ *Ab alio expectes,*” said he, “ *alteri quod feceris.*” — You may expect the treatment which you render. All the speeches of mankind have breathed this expectation. One language enjoins us to do unto others as we would that they should do to us ; another warns us not to inflict what we are not willing to experience, and another teaches that men will give as good as they receive ; and Tsze Kung said, “ What I do not wish men to do to me, I also wish not to do to them.” What is the difference ? Mutuality is the self-interest that inspires them all ; a Father’s longing to appear through the coöperation of his children.

While Publius Syrus was earning the title of Mimic Poet, from the production of his famous Mimes that exposed the foibles and passions of the Roman world,

Jesus was treading with a kindred spirit a *via dolorosa*. Publius was no mimic of truth, but obeyed an exigency as lofty as the Judean when he filled his plays with texts of holiness. His characters were "fools upon heavenly compulsion." "Do you not see," says Seneca, "how the benches echo whenever things are said which we recognize to be true, as we lend them the authority of our common consent?" And he adds, recalling portions of the Scripture according to Publius, "We hear these things, *cum ictu quodam*, as by a flash; doubt is made impossible, nor can any man ask, Wherefore? For such truth is its own reason." There can be no doubt of that.

"The *why* is plain as way to parish church."

So when Seneca sat not far from Caligula, and listened to the terrible rebuke, *Exeritur opere nequitia, non incipit*, he was overhearing the Judean phrase, "By their fruits ye shall *know them*;" for God can speak all languages in the same day. And as the bold speech swept over the theatre, drowning it in awe, to break against imperial wickedness, perhaps the sage remembered the kindred spirit of the Delphian oracle, which said to Glaucus, "To have meditated such a crime was your real crime against the god." There is no more difference in spiritual truth than in the waters which intercommunicate below the surface of the earth, and rise in fountains far apart to many-lipped mankind.

Here are some of the intuitions of Publius Syrus, closely matched with their Christian analogues:—

Amor misceri cum timore non potest: Perfect love casteth out fear.

Puras Deus non plenas aspicit manus: A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth.

Quid est beneficium dare? Imitari Deum: Who maketh his sun to rise, &c.

Beneficia plura accepit, qui scit reddere: It is more blessed to give than to receive.

"When you hear such lines," says Seneca, "you need no advocate to plead for them; they touch the corresponding affections, and bid nature exercise her own authority." Of course: "Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?"

All ancient literature is made so sacred by these primeval texts of the natural conscience that our page is too small to entertain them as they flock to the gates of memory.*

When Jesus declared that his truth was permanent because it was identical with the nature of God, in such texts as "I and my Father are one," and "Before Abraham was I am," he did not say a more religious thing than Frederic Douglass, when, in the depth of the hatred and enmity that almost overwhelmed the little minority of abolitionists, he said, "One, with God, is a majority." They took up stones to cast at him, but he passed through the midst of them, and is as safe as his truth to-day.

All fine living is derived from this consistency of the moral sense, which can afford to neglect ethnic peculiarities. We are sometimes told that though

* See an admirable paper on "The Sympathy of Religions," by T. W. Higginson, in the "Radical" for February, 1871.

identity of spiritual utterance can be traced across every zone, stumbled upon in unexpected quarters, and cradled out of many a moraine that marks past time, it became expressive of a perfect life only in one man. We might allege in reply, that one swallow does not make a summer; for mankind must have ripened by some noon of high living that transpired in every year. Heroic texts are constructive evidence of heroic behavior. Nothing shows the absence of spiritual perception in a theologian so plainly as his surmise that all the sages have only thrown light upon the darkness of all the people, and that God had nothing for the latter but fine words. On such terms mankind would be still contemporary with the mastodon. Traces of high thinking presume superior living. The papyrus upon the breast of the mummy testifies that immortality was brought to light before the gospel; but it never tells the breast's secret of its spotless life. The bandaged body that has turned to a stick of bitumen thrilled with plain manhood and womanhood, pined with the exigency of the golden rule, bore the stigmata of its own Calvary. I see the fossils of past virtue in a mummy-pit, because I find there the same organization into which our virtue flows. It was a temple of God: the brain has been scooped out, but the hollow once echoed with the invitation to be just and pure.

At the annual celebrations of the Eleusinian Mystery, the spectators were reminded of the innocence their souls should crave, by a choir of little children clad in white garments and bearing doves. So Jesus "called a little child unto him and set him in the midst

of them." What is the difference? All symbols and gestures have announced God's identity: and never more so than on that December day, when John Brown, on the way to crucifixion, laid his hand upon the little child of the slave-mother, and blessed it. The kingdom of heaven has been the Mystery-Play of all countries and ages, and its unalterable text is the soul of man.

When Jesus challenged his sectarian accusers by offering his personal character as the test of his doctrine, he said: "Which of you convinceth me of sin? and if I say the truth why do ye not believe me?" They all replied, "Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil?" For it always appears to a sectarian that a man is an infidel as soon as he proposes faithfulness to God instead of to doctrines. But when Jesus answered: "I have not a devil, but I honor my Father: if I honor myself, my honor is nothing: it is my Father that honoreth me; of whom ye say that he is your God: and if I should say I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you," — his words were no more sublime with confidence in the eternity of divine truth, than those which Theodore Parker uttered in the faces of his clerical enemies who supported the Fugitive Slave Bill: "You have called me Infidel. Surely I differ widely enough from you in my theology. But there is one thing I cannot fail to trust: that is the Infinite God, Father of the white man, Father also of the white man's slave. I should not dare violate his laws, come what may come, should you? Nay, I can love nothing so well as I love my God." The men who hated him still live

to see what his longing eyes could not see, how greatly the Father has honored him by the destruction of all the enactments of slavery; and they bear a grudging testimony, when it is safe to do it, to the inspiration of his moral sense which, while he lived among them, they always hurried to revile. No flowers can bloom upon his grave in Florence so handsome and fragrant as our grateful recollections of the manliness that clung to God. While other powerful intelligences went overboard, lashed for safety to the frail spars of tradition, and drowned upon their fragments of the wreck, to toss about for perpetual warning, he chose the principle of life, felt the warm clasp of God's hand through the whole stormy period, and feels it warm to-day.

What a remarkable thing character has been in all ages of the world. It is another kind of Revelation by which God incarnates his sense of moral weight, proportion and availability. It appears in men who have compelled the instincts of society to attend to them; to be moulded in politics, philanthropy, the science of living; who have reigned over tracts of moral feeling, from a neighborhood to a State, by virtue of some effluence that is not purely mental or spiritual, artistic or affectionate, but is a personality rather than a quality. Many of these men have been famous above other men of more distinguished attributes. Gold and diamonds are held in great repute, and always bring the highest price in the market. But a well-tempered bar of iron does all the work of mechanics, war and social intercourse. The whole world runs smoothly on it. Toughness, evenness of grain, uniformity of

structure, and a happy temper, have been the advantage of character to all leaders of cliques, parties, founders of social and religious systems; to all who have established codes and customs, and all men of weight in ordinary affairs. Isolated gifts are articles of luxury: this combination of mental and moral force in a healthy individual is the daily bread. Every age has people who are finer in some respects than its men of character. Louis Kossuth was more eloquent than all Hungary, eloquent as her wounds were. He seemed to be the tongue in every one of them to plead for liberty. What a touch of inspiration it was when he said in Faneuil Hall: "Cradle of Liberty? I do not like that phrase, — it savors too much of mortality"! Liberty is indeed as old as God; but Kossuth, who felt the truth, was not the man to give it to his country. He was not merely unfortunate: a greater thing than his ill-luck disabled him. He was only eloquent. If Russia had not interfered, nor Görgey betrayed, municipal usage and the rights of man would have left him for some one as whole, as balanced, as composed as Liberty itself is: one, perhaps, far inferior in sentiment, and destitute of imagination, rounded in every part, towering in none, never politic but always sensible; whose earnestness could not lapse through the silvery sluices of his speech, but could lie molten in an ardent heart, alloyed with judgment and long-suffering: mobile enough not to impair the toughness of fibre that alone bears continual strains, and every part of the nature strengthened with such homeliness of conviction and plain sense of right as Abraham Lincoln had.

We say that Kossuth was inspired. If we use that

word to express a capacity to receive divine impressions, or to indicate by it only the felicity of an organization that can absorb all nature, literature and life, and persuasively reproduce them, why not apply the same word to this commanding excellence of character, as we see it in Moses, Pythagoras, Phocion, Washington, Lincoln, Toussaint L'Ouverture, whose names represent a quality that is exercised with more or less notoriety in every neighborhood? Character is a plant of slow growth, because it draws from the soil and air so many elements, and has to be so deliberate in digesting them. A spire of asparagus will shoot aloft in a night. The sugar-cane hurries up its coveted sweetness through a frail pith that is nothing but a big straw. But teak and *lignum-vitæ*, the oak and the cedar have out so many roots and claim toll from so many quarters towards their staunchness, that it is some time before they make a show. Then we go to sea in them with confidence. Character is a wood of dull grain, but capable of taking on a beautiful polish, because its sap runs from conscience, intelligence, feeling, the higher reason and the common sense; from passion too, from a reserve of mighty indignation, from frankness and healthiness of all the impulses. If the divine life is not in such a product, that is at once compact and manifold, inflexible and workable, a rare concurrence of so many attributes which we suppose to belong to God, where can the divine life be found at all? Not more in the intuitive morals of Socrates and Jesus, not more in those lines of Shakspeare that are one hearth where wit, wisdom and fancy all warm themselves together, not more when the orchestra of

Beethoven becomes a pinion that takes us up from the dwindling earth to carry us off into a pervasive unity. The doctrine of chance accounts for nothing: does the doctrine of natural combination of elements, working by their independent tendency, account for any thing? Not for a single blade of grass. Elements coöperate, and various effects in every province of human life are observed. But what sustains coöperation, what prescribes the laws of mutuality and keeps a soul in them, what continually systematizes the system? James Watt, in his grimy workshop, poring over abortive models of the steam-engine, is a less striking sight than Michel Angelo on his back frescoing the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, or Columbus steering for the New World through the mist of mutiny, or Paul on Mars' Hill, or Jesus on the Mount of Olives, or Leonidas blocking up Thermopylæ. But what nourished the patience and conviction of all these, or of none of them? The Presence whose invisible things are clearly seen, *being understood by the things that are made*, even his eternal power and Godhead.

Immanence is in all intuitive comprehension of all principles, or it is in none. It exists in all characteristic excellencies, or it cannot be found in any. If you use the word to account for a moral utterance, or a prophetic feeling, you involve yourself in its use to account for all human genius that constructs, restores, beautifies, ennobles, comforts and restrains. The moral law runs into all these products and makes them religious. They are all texts of the continual Scripture. If a special excellence has attracted your attention, it does not follow that it is an isolated and exceptional

thing. It is part of the beaming of the day. You may put up your hands at each side of your eyes to view it better, but you cannot thus make a division in the daylight: it is all around the fingers, and shows them, too, ruddy with their blood.

Must not the Whole at every moment be God for that moment? Is he present here and absent there, more interested in Jerusalem than in Rome, with a partiality for one man above another? His Moral Law makes all men of one blood, and inspires the whole positiveness of their life.

Let us escape from all ordinances and enclosures, and fasten to the bosom of God instead of to the faucet of a sect. Let us trust ourselves in the open weather that makes our souls robust with the air and sunshine of heaven.

V.

LAW OF THE DIVINE IMMANENCE.

THE individual applies directly to the source of all power, but all the past which he contains is involved in this application and helps him make it, whether the direction which he takes be science, art, imagination, morals, or religion. He may become a new inventor or prophet, but not the same as if he had been one of the helpers of the reign of Menes, or as if Egyptian civilization had not become extinct. He begins where it left off, even if he only reproduces one of its lost arts. He does it with a fresh advantage, and his position is readily seen in some fineness of detail or added convenience. His monolith may be no larger, but steam moves it for him, and dispenses with thousands of hands and hours for other work. His tools cleave no more exactly than the long row of wooden pegs saturated with water; but the economy to which he has attained is seen in the quantity of manhood that is saved for innumerable kindred labors. He supplements all the triumphs of culture with the sacredness of the individual.

But what is meant by saying that the individual applies directly to the source of all power? The answer to this question involves points that must be carefully

stated and developed, with some attention to the value of language, that no terms may be used which convey only notions, those unballasted and pilotless sailors of the air.

As scientific subjects were much hampered by the predilection of the Greeks for phrases, so this subject of Inspiration is obscured by notions derived from Biblical language. The people of the Bible assume to have received definite messages from the Lord. So when the theologian finds distinct sentences thus labelled, whether the subject-matter be to extirpate a race or to found one, to overreach a Philistine, or whatsoever questionable proceeding may have furtherance for the chosen people in it, these, as well as more manly and spiritual utterances, help him to construct a theory that the Lord declares himself by voice, symbol or sign, dream, suggestion, prophetic message. We have insensibly imbibed the habit of expecting *communication* as a test of divine activity: definite statements, or irruptions of thinking and feeling, must announce that it is at hand. But *in-breathing* is simply continuous presence. It is the sustained evolution of all natures and species by means of their appropriate organization.

This is not a doctrine of mere pantheistic immanence, which leaves us irresponsible products of a Force or a Life, or reduces us to be terms of predestination, incapable of independent activity. Our organization is the very thing that interferes to prevent this, by announcing a conscience; that is, we become conscious of a sense that says to us, *I ought*; *I ought not*. The in-breathing nourishes the sense of a responsible *I*.

The immanence of the divine Person does not become individualized till this sense of the *I* is reached. Then the *I* saves its freedom, and increases it by an act which at first might seem to annihilate it; that is, by admitting all of the divine in-being possible: and this is an educable process, and may arrive at high perfection. The individual himself is the result of the conscious and unconscious coöperation of the past with the divine presence, and when he appears he is a centre where this process meets to carry forward its career. And he becomes free in proportion as he surrenders himself to this divine in-being, which is the only perfect freedom because it is coördinated by the universal laws.

The vegetable and animal kingdoms betray the forefeeling of this destiny. It can be detected on the frontier between both, where we are uncertain if an object be a plant or an animal. The object solves the doubt by a vague and distant hint of the quality that belongs to human choice. Mr. Waterhouse Hawkins says that a friend of his had for some years a sea-anemone in an aquarium, which would receive its food from the hands of its owner, but never from Hawkins's hands, though he had a hundred times made the experiment of endeavoring to feed it. Here is not merely perception for food, but a comparing, a distinguishing sensibility, a choice in the mode of taking it, belonging to an object the least likely, in our estimation, to show it.

But the plants, also, accept the elements that favor their individuality, and reject the unsuitable. Potatoes in a cellar will put forth their bleached shoots towards the single window that admits the light; the process

is dual : at one end a potato, at the other end a sun. A Rhode-Island apple-tree became aware, by a subterranean inkling, that the body of Roger Williams, though buried at a considerable distance in the orchard, might be reached with effort and patience. So it put forth a root in that direction, ignoring every other, and struck through the decaying coffin to the skull of the great champion of religious liberty, as if to absorb that advantage into New-England's symbolic fruit. Thence it spread in a fine net-work of fibre over every member of the body, and eventually transferred its whole nutriment into successive crops of pippin or russet, leaving a perfect cast of it, done in that silent modelling, for the Historical Society.

How is such an instinct related to the universal Life? Certainly Deity cannot be a ghoul, reduced to grubbing up graves for a livelihood : nevertheless we can accept the facts to indicate that In-being appears in plant life and physical life, as well as in mind and conscience. But it is necessary to find some distinction between the two manifestations. The physical functions of the plant and animal are taken up by the human body and carried on : they include involuntary vital acts and the whole economy of the organization. They also take a prominent part in that condition of our ordinary life which lies between physical functions and the mental and intuitive forms of our individuality ; that stirring, choring, bustling, mimicing, gossiping, and striving ; that indifferent intercourse of people that reproduces the habits of instinct, and swarms in the basement over which the mind entertains illustrious guests.

There is no point of the whole scale from which the divine in-being has retreated; it nourishes all, but the simpler the organization the less the freedom. The relation of the lower forms of life to the immanence is simple necessity. As the structure becomes complicated, and opens more gates to the creative energy, the necessity, to our surprise, diminishes, just when we should expect to find it confirmed and intensified by this increase of absolute life. The object, instead of being swamped by taking on board so much from beyond itself, rides more freely. Dead weight is expanded into buoyancy. It is because it receives more of the divine freedom. The object arrests, and gives a hint of, this tendency of absolute life towards a liberation of itself into higher forms. We see that it is not taking the direction of imprisonment for itself, or of threatening abject servitude for individuals; and we trace it by ever widening avenues of law as it escapes from legal necessity into those human functions which report the sense of an I. Its culminating in that place or relation is an act that leaves both free: the one remains God, the other becomes Man. The conscience is the highest reach of this, and its *ought* justifies and explains the whole advance in freedom.

What an earnest expectation of this topmost result is announced by the first faint tokens of life in the development of created things. We know what purpose animated every stage of creation by the consciousness into which we have developed. The lapse of time from the moment of the simplest cell and the minutest motion to the present hour is rehearsed in us. We are the sum of it, and are therefore capable of imagining

the rapture which flew into every fresh form of life, as the divine composer, summoning instrument after instrument into his harmony, climbed with his theme from those that offered but a single note to those that exhaust the complexity of thought and feeling, to combine them into expression, kindling through hints, phrases, sudden concords, mustering consents of many wills, releases of each one's felicity into comradeship, till the sweet tumult becomes his champion, and bursts into the acclaim of a whole world: "I ought — so then I will." The toppling instruments concur, become the wave that touches that high moment, lifts the whole deep and holds it there.

The intellect has its share in that unity of consciousness, and brings to the front of knowledge the method of laws which have gradually set it apart from the worlds beneath it to become a Person. Then science is possible, and the mind becomes its own interpreter. The right method of thinking is part of the divine continuity; it is sure to displace, eventually, all arbitrary or superstitious methods, because these are only arrested stages of itself, or its imperfectly apprehended drift, distorted rays through the prism which mankind has not yet learned to hold.

It seems that the in-being of God has been observed sooner in the conscience than in the intellect. This is because the intellect has inherited so many complex sensations, and is embarrassed by its own attempts at knowing a world which does not instantly declare its secrets. So there is a process of observation and deduction that is not identical with the process of creation. The infinite intelligence seems to have retreated

from the confusion, or to appear not to care to be understood. At what point of direct contact dare we maintain that the divine in-being is?

Intellect splits into manifold inventiveness, and gives birth to the different kinds of intelligences. The divine manifoldness appears as Gift. It is no objection that isolated gifts may be exercised unconsciously. There is a great range from automatic cerebral action to the synthesis of the highest minds, as they consciously gather from all parts of creation the effects which betray the mode of the divine operation, and how every thing is correlated and coheres. The higher this synthesis, or putting together, the greater is the in-being of the mind that thus declares itself in a kindred intelligence. It may mount into an intuitive feeling of law, that is like, and coequal with, the sense of absolute Ought and Ought Not, and involves a consciousness of being part of an infinite Person. For it defers to the order of the universe, to its intellectual method, to its synthesis of forces. The more it bends thus to the great centres that seek and draw it, the less individual it feels, because it no longer adheres to partial and transitional shifts, and is not detained by conceit for them. The I becomes freer with every abandonment to this organic closeness of God, till it can exclaim with Kepler, "I think Thy thoughts after Thee!"

This intuitive apprehension of the drift of facts and of phenomena is immanence of the Mind that is nourishing the facts. Creating becomes interpreting, and breaks into speech through things that are made.

For if the phenomena that are thus interpreted do

not result from any fortuitous concourse of atoms, but rather betray mind by their regularity and persistence, age after age, in every quarter of the universe where observation can reach them, the interpretation must, *a fortiori*, betray the presence of mind. The finite intelligence is then a fact or phenomenon with the infinite mind in contact with it.

No matter if the finite mind is unconscious of this vitalizing proximity, or denies it altogether in favor of some theory of organic action of the individual as an effect of forces. The denial only pushes the vitality one step to the rear, and leaves it in a place where it must apply to its real base for nourishment or perish. And the unconsciousness of a scientific mind that it is so sustained by the in-being of a divine mind cannot be alleged against the real closeness of that Mind. As well might the failure of a plant or animal to apprehend the great fact be held sufficient to deny it: for all objects, including men, are recipients of more life than they refer to its source. The organization becomes the measure and tool of it without finding self-reflection and analysis essential, or without pushing it far enough to discover a personal Will that belongs to a divine intelligence.

A habit is quite prevalent among scientific men who stand closest to the real order of the world, and who are emancipating us from old phrases and methods, to refer all phenomena to Force, or to hold the general idea of Cause without caring to suppose it Person or to attribute to it a direct and continuous contact with all objects through the channels of their laws. This indifference of science may exist in minds which are the

most thoroughly inspired by the rational order of Nature, the most conscientious and self-sacrificing to pursue its results, the most courageous to combat superstitions, and without even mentioning the name of God. Their fidelity is none the less divinely sustained because they are not conscious that it is, or do not care whether it is or not. Their experiments pursue a phenomenon to its remotest coverts by the sure trail of the natural scent it leaves: nothing turns them aside or throws them off. Right mental method puts them on the track of the law of the object, and that is enough for them. They will devote a life to the noble worship of pursuing, and deem it irrelevant or superfluous to be called off to talk about the divine immanence, and to set up the necessity of being supplied with a personal God. But their Truth is God, their Force is him also, their invariable Law is the proclamation of his nearness, and their subtle facts the hints he gives of directions favorable to pursue.

This is the position of many foreign men of science, who are doing such a noble work in importing the real methods of the universe into every branch of knowledge. Their language frequently presumes an indifference which they do not feel; for they hold it to be a sacred duty to confine phrases to the business they have in hand, which is that of detecting and preserving specimens of the actual processes of creation. Their rapture goes forth in that direction; they point you to marks of a wonderful footstep, and kindle with their whole nature full of intuition as they see and declare to you how all feet fit into it, and how all things must have passed that way. No more relig-

ious attitude can be conceived: for religion is recognition of central facts, the confinement of effects to the lines of causality, the emancipation of mankind from ignorance and false habits, and the reconciliation of all knowledge to invisible Truth.

It is only when the scientific mind goes out of this professional neutrality of expression to make its facts deny Intelligence and Will that it becomes irreligious, because then instead of conciliating facts with causes it divorces them, and leaves all certitude at the mercy of a phrase. They repeat the error of the theologians, and land us, however correct their methods of experiment and observation may be, in a notion: it is either Correlation, Protoplasm, or some other substitute for the old metaphysics, but no improvement on them as statements of final and efficient cause. So long as these phrases are honestly held to represent the points which the mind has reached, and the tentative process which gathers and coördinates the greatest number of phenomena, with no pretence to impose a finality nor to claim that there is nothing more beyond, the scientific man may be praised for his temperate and impartial speech. Many shall cry, Lord, Lord! out of mere custom of causation, and be no more conscious of In-being than the men who declare that they are conscious of nothing but method.

But, we repeat, this unconsciousness of the scientific intellect is not damaging to the fact that God inheres in its method, and is the breath of its suggestions. Individual consciousness is not essential to this vitalizing presence: it need not be the continuous nor the occasional result of it. This question has been much

embarrassed by two theological errors: that man must live in a state of personal experience of Omnipresence, and that communication is its favorite way to be announced and recognized. But the divine mind appears as Gift; its fulness becomes ultimated thus in man, as all animate and inanimate things describe its freshest expressions. If it communicates, it is by the advantages of structure. Many degrees of this exist with more or less accompaniment of consciousness. Most commonly the consciousness is confined to those rare moments when the gift blossoms into fruition, when moments of success impend, when experiences accumulate around a soul's point, and a thrill of recognition passes, a consent of receptivity, unspoken, or vocal with all the praises that the imagination, as it fills with the blood of the hour's great pulse, may lavish on it.

The man who calls himself an atheist and derides the sentimentalism of communion with God, honestly declaring that no such fact ever entered into his consciousness, is a better testimony to an indwelling Deity than the crowds of pietists who try to inflate themselves with the wind of phrases into a state of continual distention with Omnipresence, because they are forcing their structure beyond its organic ability, while he is sincere enough to state exactly how far the structure in his case repeats any such experience. For in-being, though of a transcendent essence, does not choose to transcend any structure which it brings down by inheritance and sustains; our authority for saying this is the structure itself, which cannot give any other account of its existence. And one structure can transcend

another only on the strength of the in-being that strictly corresponds to both. After a shell has once been cast and filled, there is no way of increasing the latent capacity of the charge which it contains. It soars to heights and drops at distances that chronicle its calibre. So that if a man truly reports absence of any sense of God, he does not report absence of God, but presence of God in the sincerity which makes known a structural defect. His state of divineness is superior to that of the religionists who assume a sense of God because no respectable family can be without it. Great numbers of people attribute consciousness of God to conventional emotions which are warmed by religious exercises into semblance of organic life. Nothing is nearer to them than their spurious, sectarian self. At best they only labor to reproduce or to imitate some vanished moment of profound experience, when life or death was surprised listening at the door. The common belief in a God is compounded of thought and emotion, but a perception of God is generally only an intellectual assent in the interest of causation. For people differ considerably in the faculty to condense the latent God into personal consciousness, just as they differ in ability to state in prose or hymn the condition itself when it arrives. With the great majority of people it never passes beyond the satisfaction which moral triumphs bring. When the organization asserts itself by normal acts in any direction, and a function is appeased, the light heart praises the moment and enjoys its health. The mystics insist that all mankind shall make pretence to more than this, and they encourage cerebral exaltations by voting them to be influxes of

the invisible. Like the alchemist and the astrologer, they have fooled the world with fancies. An iron kettle cannot be transmuted into gold, and the stars in their courses never took the trouble to fight with or against Sisera.

But it is none the less a mental necessity to accept the in-being of Will and Intelligence. No assumptions that consciousness and communication are or are not vital experimental facts can affect this necessary attitude of derived intelligence. The scientific man may be only calling it by other names, so long as he is unconscious of the reputed experiences of the theological world. If a mind can see the drift of all the phenomena that are continuously nourished and put forth for observation, it must account for its ability to see the drift. How can it detect the law of the plant except by means of the plant's law? As soon as the mind perceives the absence of chance from the minutest turn and stage of the development of species, it is aware that it perceives this by means of intelligent purpose imported into itself; it submits to this general intelligence, and lives with all other created things immediately from the Will which it embodies. But the mind refuses to expect communication because itself is an organized test of In-being.

Inventions and discoveries which increase our knowledge are generally accumulations of a tendency towards them that has controlled a number of minds, perhaps for generations. Gifted persons contribute a surmise, a detail, an imperfect experiment: their lives are haunted with such a strong probability that they put forth repeated efforts in its direction, abandon it,

recur to it, and slowly educate the general thinking, so that fresh minds take up the matter at an advantage, furnish more probability, break through here and there into the daylight, and bequeath at least encouragement to their successors. Not a hint is ever lost. If separate families of cultivated men do not transmit it, the republic of letters keeps it perpetually on file, where a kindred mind, consulting the achievements of the race, is sure to find it. The special thought is rekindled, and at length all hearths are furnished with its comfort. So Gift is slow in elaborating its preferences. Its growth is often checked, and the earth's climate appears inclement. But the hardy fruit is favored by these suspenses, and acquires firmness and flavor. The In-being that allowed some millions of years for making balls of sun-sand can be patient while relays of minds are condensing the matter of knowledge, to set fresh surprises rolling in our sky. It consumes as much time to interpret a world as to make it.

So all the laws which lead to science and invention have a history. The discovery of the laws of motion must correct the crude ideas of Aristotle, and prepare for Newton, who supplements them with the five truths of gravitation, and drives out of the heavens the epicycles of Ptolemy and the vortices of Descartes. That apple was two thousand years in falling. The law of refraction precedes the law of polarization, and there must be a theory of caloric to disappoint men and pique them to discover that heat is but a mode of motion. Linnæus classifies plants and describes the characters and functions of each part of

them, before Goethe can perceive that all the parts are metamorphoses of the same primitive member. Humboldt and other travellers observe the variation of the compass and the dip of the needle on so many spots of the earth's surface, that the facts suggest to several minds at once the theory of a magnetic equator and of magnetic poles ; but the right man has not yet appeared to convert the conjecture into science. Before Dalton, seeking for a law of chemical combination, can speak of atomic weights, Wollaston must treat atoms as chemical equivalents, and Davy must investigate their proportions. After Dalton has finished a neglected life, Faraday finds himself well equipped to give each elementary substance a number which expresses the relative amount of its decomposition ; he calls it "electro-chemical equivalent," and the identity of electrical and chemical action is at last attained.

Oken stumbles over a deer's skeleton, and picks up the sudden suggestion that a skull is an expanded vertebra ; a frog's leg has a spasm when a Galvani happens to be standing near ; Franklin's knuckle draws the first spark from the fact of an electrical equilibrium : but long periods of tentative experiment prepared all these and similar lucky moments. It seems that the original plan to have pterodactylic and saurian forerunners of all compact and economical forms reigns also in the domain of thought. But theories sprawl towards symmetry, and the divine mind is content with the direction. The results surprise ignorance, and seem to have arrived by legerdemain ; but all discoverers know best how gradually conjecture

has reached their consciousness of Law through brain-cells modified for centuries. Man grows till his hand can reach the latch; it is a simple motion, then, to enter. And throughout the whole development, it was In-being which made it impossible for a Newton to precede Pythagoras, Beethoven a Terpander, Shakspeare a Homer. In-being, then, controlled each point of the vast line.

When the growth ripens, Galileo invents a telescope, Watt a steam-engine, Goethe discovers Morphology; Alexander Braun could not earlier have drawn up his first formula of Phyllotaxis, or the fractional ratio of the spiral ascent of leaves around a stem; and Prof. Peirce must wait to hear of that before his brain can build into the suggestion that the same fractions are approximate expressions of the relative times of rotation of the planets. The Mind that has so long plotted and constructed on the scale of an infinite fraction, which these approximately express, finally lets out the secret. What other mind has shared it? There is no technical communication, because the mental structure touches the law with the felicity to which it has attained.

God either is or is not immanent in this. Many scientific men imply that the whole suite of phenomena lay packed in the first germs of life. The theory is, that primitive matter was endowed with everything that has since happened: all forms, all creatures, all developments of thought, have been evolutions, by regular stages and a discernible logic, from points of matter that were also points of forces chartered by Intelligence for this voyage of history,

to set down instalments at successive ports ; opening fresh instructions but receiving no fresh ones, everything having been anticipated and put on board before the start. Science appears to favor this theory for two reasons : it obviates the necessity of importing a Creator all along the route, to superintend modifications and contrive fresh species ; for this trotting in and out of a divine intervention, so dear to theology, is very repugnant to the men of Law. Another reason is, that the uses to which theology has put the idea of Omnipresence, to sustain miraculous irruptions, special providences and communications, has also disgusted the scientific mind, which is impressed by the spectacle of a providence that is continuity and uniformity of causation. It refuses, in short, to be guided by the assumption of a meddlesome and capricious incoming, as of some one who has afterthoughts, and desires to change his mind or modify the results of forces ; who is constantly picking at his own works, because he discovers that unless he is on the ground there is no help to convert a scale into a feather, gills into lungs, flippers into hands ; that everything turns out to have the fatal defect that it is unable to go alone, and that man himself cannot add a pin-feather to a pigeon's leg, or modify its throat, unless Allmightiness is on the spot.

The tendency to concede great results to the latency of forces gathered at points of matter is a reaction from the fetichism of theology. It is no wonder that minds, which are drenched with the sense of an orderly and gradual development of objects by minute changes through vast periods, should not be able to contain a

drop of the dregs in the old cup of supernaturalism. Let the savage vivify his calabash and necklace of teeth with a god, if he pleases. Science prefers a God large enough, and of intelligence comprehensive enough, to be remanded back into eternity, where the first plastic germ and the last thinking soul occupy, with all that transpires between, but a breath or instant which is the everlasting Now. To Him, whose watch-tick is our millions of years just on the point of striking, what is the zeal of the theologian to import Omnipresence into his petty pulpit spasm; what the intent of the naturalist to confine it to the origins of species, or of the historian to chain this watch-dog to the threshold of epochs?

And we must concede that science makes out its case in favor of potential forces that cluster at points of matter, travel through their combinations, are correlated or opposed, and waltz in and out of each other in endless masquerade. Definite physical conditions draw after them invariable demonstrations of power and vitality. When the brakes are applied to the wheels of a train, and their motion disappears, where is it? It is liberated into the form of heat. What is the philosophy of this simple transaction? Something has taken place: there has been a manifestation of elemental law. Did God shift from motion into heat, and wait there to be brought round to motion-making processes again? Was he watching the brakeman's arm that he might be on time, and free his heat from his motion? No, says Science: no God took passage by that train. The most we can believe is

that the first infinite Fulness precontained the invariable correlation.

That is the least we can believe. No matter at how many removes, interpose as many of them as we please, the fact must at last be due to something. A man may pick his teeth, a bird may preen its feathers, an insect may acquire the protection of its color, without the co-presence of Deity. We do not know the extent to which the creative mind economizes its relation to things, and turns them over to its practised menials. There must be dignity as well as frugality of Omnipresence. But the trivial occurrence between the brake and the wheel has range enough to invite co-presence; and that is not intervention. Perhaps no other fact could so well indicate the vast and incessant shifting of motion into other elemental conditions, to keep up the interplay of laws upon the scale of a universe. The slight local flitting of motion into heat, under the turn of a brakeman's muscle, is like the bent twig, or the pressed grass-blade, that betrays to the trapper which way his game has passed on its long route through apparently deserted forests. It is a flicker of expression upon an infinite countenance, where all the moods of creation disport themselves: now and then a side-long glance detains our conscious observation, but it is significant of spaces over which all the eyes in all the planets could not be concentrated to report one great occurrence, and all intelligences could not overtake its manifoldness. But show us a stick whose weather-side has been turned under, or an abraded tree-bark, and we can satisfy ourselves that a wildness takes to covert and invites us to pursue.

“Malo me Galatea petit —

Et fugit ad salices, et se cupit ante videri : ”

towards me Galatea tosses an apple, then she flies to the willow-clumps, wishing that my glance may follow. The apple is expressive enough, though we are not detained by its flavor, because Galatea throws it only to provoke us to leave it for herself.

To say that acts of correlation were precalculated, precontained, is a mere phrase which accounts for nothing but only relegates them to primordial germs. If, to relieve this from being only a notion, one says that the germs started to travel with the fulness in every direction till there became a universe, he rightfully says that the Infinite passed into representation by a universe : it accompanied its germs into action. What else can it be doing, indeed, except *being* every point of space in every moment of time? He says, what he ought to say, that In-being is the immediate cause of all phenomena, which occur *to us* in a series of years, and in a logically graduated method, but occur to God in an eternal moment. For time and space form only a “provisional cuticle” for mind in its finite condition.

“He glows above

With scarce an intervention, presses close
And palpitatingly, His soul o'er ours!
We feel Him, nor by painful reason know!
The everlasting minute of creation
Is felt there; *Now* it is, as it was *Then*;
All changes at His instantaneous will,
Not by the operation of a law
Whose maker is elsewhere at other work!
His soul is still engaged upon his world.”

But when Mr. Browning adds, —

“Man’s praise can forward it, man’s prayer suspend,
For is not God all-mighty?”

he fancies God not so mighty as to be independent of the ejaculations into which man’s joy or grief transpires. God’s co-presence, with all finite structures, might diminish the bulk of dictionaries, and ease bodies of divinity of groaning on our shelves.

Man’s *deeds* can forward it, but the bad ones seem to have been in the long run quite as providential as the good. How bad were they, then?

Now we say, Watt invents a steam-engine, Goethe discovers Morphology. There either is or is not divine in-being in the structures which reach these results. Why is there not, if there is in the plant? The plant draws sap in this eternal moment of creation, not by its own device, but in the stress of the moment. It has not concluded to be a jonquil, a tulip, a violet. Does a combination of earths and forces qualify its name? Then what qualifies the combination? Is it a primitive fancy of form and color, packed into a monad of matter, left to burst out eventually in our meadow, as a firework’s changes blaze out and into each other, and dispense with the original fusee clear through its combinations? Then every thing has got everywhere, and extruded, if not abolished, its own Creator. At the least, he has stepped aside, as a man who lights his firework, and he has attained through all these millions of years to the function of being superfluous. The primordial germs emptied out all his infinity, and his first creative act was fatal to him.

Perhaps this splendid moth of the Cosmos may yet alight upon the deserted cocoon.

Immanence has not displaced Watt's mentality, and dropped into him with the idea of Engine: for in that case he would be himself an engine with the steam turned on. How shall we save ourselves from this pantheistic absorption, and save the immanence that nourishes the individual structure? By recurring to the idea previously expressed that the self-working *I* attains to freedom through contact with the Immanence. We may say that Watt is immersed in it, but as an individual with a definite habit of structure, that evolves Immanence into special ideas and forms. His inventiveness is his special freedom in Immanence. And *in his* freedom Immanence obeys and preserves its own. It is continuous and not irruptional, and is related to Watt in the universal character of designer and maintainer of structure. Watt is not a free person who is occasionally controlled, enriched by a suggestion, domineered by a divine moment, thrown into abeyance by the intrusion of Immanence with its details of an engine. But he is a person whose gift acquires its freedom in compatibility with, as well as in consequence of, its contact with the Immanence; and it is the law or natural disposition of this Immanence to reach finite freedom in this way. Watt's speciality, Goethe's deductive sense, is a hint or partial forth-setting of the absolute freedom that Immanence has by virtue of containing absolute Law. And the freedom of each man is in proportion to the content of his speciality.

If a doubt arises that mere phrasing and verbal

jugglery is here engaged in holding off Immanence to keep human freedom inviolate, and then in turning it on to keep the freedom nourished, and so to balance the terms as to create an abstract notion of such an union or free interplay of structure and in-being, the doubt is dispelled by recurring to the actions of the soul that announce its highest sense of a conscience. Millions of the humblest men supply this important ratification. In that resort, where a feeling of dependence and of individuality mingle and flow forth into a conception of a divine source of truth, we recover the value of the phrases we have used, and renew our belief that they represent a vital fact. We may be unable to get any farther than this in attempting to account for two freedoms in contact and yet compatible, for a finite structure that develops Gift out of in-being, and yet remains an individual. There is a point here that surpasses the kind of observation which enjoys the benefit of being explained. Nevertheless, it is none the less essential to the coherence of all human knowledge and experience.

We say, then, that the broodings and developments of genius result from the divine continuousness in the partial freedoms of the men of genius. The whole line of their inheritance represents the course of this continuousness, freighted with the purport of the lyric, the symphony, the intuition of a law, the cunning of machines to catch and utilize the elements. No point of freedom in the long route was infringed with a view to these results. And when the men arrive, the continuity has arrived also, to sustain and not to displace the I of each, as it develops its peculiar felicity. Its

trials, agonies, and private difficulties are not abrogated. There is no infinite arrogance of overcoming and displacement, no infinite fussiness pulling at the sleeve, no pressing of superfluous assistance. For the structure of the individual stands built in the forethought of centuries. The I loses not one function, nor one disability, by having its freedom out of the absolute freedom that is immanent. For its functions and disabilities are the result of both freedoms which have been long at work up to this day of Immanence's special mood to nourish, prolong, and transmit that special case. And the more freely the man exercises his function, to reduce his disabilities of birth and fortune, the greater becomes his share of the absolute freedom. He is more Goethean, and less Goethe, than ever. But he is not simply Immanence, because he is Goethean. He is not a pipe for fluting. A pipe has no freedom; it therefore has no relation to the mood of fluting, and fluting merely adapts and adopts it, blows it, lets it drop. It is dead all the time it is not fluted on. Goethe entertains the divine mind in Goethean fashion, and becomes thus a condition of its immanence.

Does the whole of our special immanence, that by which we live in our physical and spiritual entireness, touch the whole of us at the same moment, as the brine excites all the tentacles of the star-fish to lift and feed? If so, what is its state or mood, when any part of us suspends its function? does it treat us like plants whose blossoms announce the climax of its visits, and droop to mark its stages of retreating? This would be a too mechanical representation of the

interplay between structure and in-being. Our freedom is its opportunity, into whatever gift and with whatever integrity of culture and exercise we invite it. But this inviting does not bring on submersion. It is only freedom conforming to the law which it derives from absolute freedom. Immanence corresponds to our spontaneousness, but the latter is not an arbitrary dictate of the former; rather the success of the law of immanence, whose condition is to reach success through our law of freedom.

When the delicately organized brain of the great thinker or poet receives the accumulating blood, and details it to the cells that are appropriate to the thought and emotion that gather and clamor at their portals to be liberated into expression, and fixed in brain-fibre and in speech at once and for ever, a sense of lifting, of light and gladness, penetrates such moments of creativeness, to signalize that the soul's freedom has admitted the whole of its in-being. The piled-up experience does not report that some distant or exceptional inspiration has invaded the individual, and turned him into a mouth-piece for thought that would be otherwise impossible to him. The flashes and sudden illuminations are often held to be the accompaniments of divine influx; and a lofty style of egotism, which is only consciousness of power, has been deceived, during many periods of the world's imperfect self-appreciation, into accepting these popular marks of the coming of God, and lending to the deceit all the intensity of personal emotion. The heavens are opened, the wings rustle and descend, the eagle brings the electric pen in its talons, the sun of noonday is obscured by the

lightning conviction, there is disparting, disspreading overhead, thinner and thinner grows the vault, and warmth and rapture rain through into a human ecstasy. Is a fact of influx of a divine Person thus translated into the symbolic imagination of an individual, or is the latter simply set free into the amplitude and heat of his own structure's highest moment, as it invites and entertains all the absolute freedom that is normal to it? In this sense there is contact with a divine Person, but it is conditioned by inherited gifts of structure, advantages of culture, fineness of native fibre, build of the brain's complexity. The experience of lifting and gladness is a moment of pure health, when the man fulfils his function with a bold and haughty ease; it is a culmination of animal and mental spirits in the trains of thinking carried on by the individual. At last the solution comes, and gates swing open on hinges festally sounding, and the roof vibrates with its harmony. The cerebral action passes into emotion, light, and power, from a point that has been bulging with its life-tide till it can no longer be held there, but must pass to seek its equilibrium again. These are the moments magnified by the childlike surprise and egotistic humbleness of all the mystics, vision-seers, and special communicationists, into a supernaturalism that defies the laws of structure, and substitutes a caprice of its own. Theology is infested with its misleading phrases.

If the evolution of thought and feeling depends, on the physical side, upon cerebral conditions, then, whatever we suppose the resultant thought to be, as to its substance, may there not be a setting free of some-

thing, as the cerebral contribution passes into the form of thinking? Why not, as in other modes of motion, an actual experience of light and warmth? A smart blow upon the skull will let through into it a sky-full of stars: the concussion really imparts to the optic nerve the sense of flashes of light. There is some mode of physical activity whenever the gray matter of the brain gets so far as to arrange itself into a thought, and to fix it in a permanent form that is laid up for use and remembrance. When some fresh idea or emotion is secreted, and the personal experience receives it as a contribution to its structure, the moment of activity must have some kind of physical correlation. Whether thought be derived from the dual action of brain and mind, or whether it be only the brain's effervescence, we might expect in either case that the body's complicity would report itself in phenomena that correspond, in some kind of physical symbolism. It is not a groundless caprice that associates light with thought, warmth with emotion, obscurity and mist with mental groping, and a floating, airy joy with the success of every conviction. Nay; the brain rises into its native health, even when there is no conscious interposition of a train of thought to help it climb: it fills with blood, and mantles into gladness. Suddenly, out of a neutral condition of the whole inward nature, something soars, like a lark from the meadow, and carols a surprise from an open vista, where just previously we noticed nothing but a flat and opaque surface.

And, certainly, the highest conscious moments of the soul cannot be all impalpable spirituality; for the

soul's moment is fructification, and that is a proceeding that depends upon two, upon the consummation of their marriage. The stigmas quiver to announce the pollen's touch. We shall probably find that all natural movements of the passing of one thing over into another sets free some element.

When a blossom is unfolding, there is an increase of temperature that sometimes amounts to fifty degrees; the botanist would say that its purpose is to develop the seed. No doubt; but the act of unfolding liberates this warmth that makes the act known to observation.

Mr. Kingsley, writing from the tropics, says that, so fast does the spadix of flowers of the *Monstera* expand, "an actual genial heat and fire of passion, which may be tested by the thermometer, or even by the hand, is given off during fructification." So, many a soul, journeying out of its debatable land, through passions of growth and self-conviction, is felled at noonday by excess of light, and overhears the last words of its perplexity and hesitation, as its own nature escapes from their persecution and assumes its rights.

"Of a sudden it flashed through me," people say. The physical effect which accompanies vivid thinking, particularly where all the preliminary processes are condensed into one rapid moment, is thus preserved by language. It will yet be possible to measure this light and heat, these auroral flittings of the firmament of brain.

Thought yearns and expects, when it is approaching its culmination, as feeling does. A solution, or a sug-

gestion, is a direct answer from above only in the sense that the immanence corresponds to the whole process of freedom, and is fragrant in the flower thereof. These exalted states of feeling, deduction, revery, meditation, invention, and discovery, have often been misinterpreted into voice, message, special invasion of invisible agencies. Some temperaments are peculiarly susceptible to this delicate conceit of superior powers. There is a whole orchestral scale of it. A tune on the oboe is less subtle, penetrating, soaring and personal, than the same tune upon the violin. It puts to the lips its celebration of meadow dainties, breathes the pensiveness of groves, is haunted by the wood-note of escaping Syrinx. But we hug the violin close to the human bosom that is a hive full of joy, terror, pity, and despair; its seasoned freedom is offered to the heart's freedom, one vibration draws the line of immanence, thrills with fitness, but says nothing of conquest nor invasion.

What shall prevent us from declaring that the divine in-being enjoys the raptures of these moments, when our partial freedom runs its flag up and reports successes: a field won, an advantage gained, an intrenchment stormed! Immanence must be in all liberations of vital force. The broader the finite freedom is, the more deeply the infinite is implicated. And as it is the implication of a personal will, it cannot be impassive. Our own joy is a gamut on the infinity of God; and what is he but the perfect health of the universe, the only Being who does not fall sick with the evils that infest mankind, since they do not pertain to his absolute condition, but are mere contingents of devel-

oping structure. Such irrepressible robustness cannot be conscious of defect. It is a divine impartiality that must be always glad. And every pure joy announces a mood of something that is prevalent in the vicinity: not a joy superposed or interpolated, but June, that "climbs to a soul in grass and flowers."

VI.

A DIVINE PERSON.

WE have said that the tendency of American Religion should be to establish some necessary truths that express real organic relations between the finite and the infinite. To force or pretend a belief in more than these would be to overload the soul with superfluous baggage. But to abandon any one of these would be to throw away a personal necessity. Whether man advances or retreats, the day's march is a strict commissary, and serves out exactly what he needs. The march is, indeed, the stubborn experience that discovers the rule of the commissariat. Before people start, they put up many a whimsey which they expect to find comfortable on occasion; but a few peremptory days make them abandon these one after the other with sighs of regret which soon change to congratulations. In the old rambling mansion of theology, even the warming-pans and foot-stoves of shivering generations are hoarded up: now and then they are brought out to cosset some valetudinarian. But motion itself is the improved warming apparatus to an army in the field.

The vital functions of the individual are his body of divinity; they comprise the articles of his faith, and refer him to its objects.

We are prepared to see that a divine Person is an object that closely corresponds to necessities of the individual, notwithstanding a wide feeling which exists, in circles where science or indifference disclaim them, that the organic evolution of Force does everybody's business with sufficient promptness, economy and advantage. This evolution of force has not been denied by us; it has, on the contrary, been assumed as the nerve-system that pervades the whole surface, but gathers into ganglia deep towards the centre where in-being touches and controls it. The law of in-being depends upon its mediation through all the structures of the universe.

But the in-being is not merely another force behind a force; it must have essential Personality because all its manifestations presume intelligence and will. When the word Person is applied to the infinite being, it is apt to carry over the idea of limitation from our experience of individuals. After we have called a man a person, we shrink from using the word to convey the conception that there is a vital consciousness in God, until we learn that limitation is not essentially connoted by it. The divine Being is sometimes said to be impersonal, in order to prevent the grandest of our conceptions from becoming impounded in a term that belongs to our finite life. But when the word Person is rightly defined we see that the epithet *impersonal* denies its essential infinity, remands in-being back into the category of force, and strips it of intelligence and will. The epithet may be used by people who intend to preserve these attributes, and are far from conceiving that God is a mode of force, or a soul of the world;

both pantheism and anthropomorphism are out of favor with them, and *impersonal* seems to assert neither. In preserving the idea of infinity it releases God from limitations. But it imposes the fatal limitation of emptying all consciousness out of this infinity. It secures vastness at the expense of qualities that make the vastness worth having, and available for creative objects. Common sense pays a tribute to the value of the word person when it instinctively judges that the epithet *impersonal* takes an object out of the domain of volition. So it is no matter what is sometimes implied by people who use it: they cannot combine their implication with the organic sense of the epithet, for it will not bear the weight of any quality that belongs to Person.

We attribute Personality to the divine Being because we cannot otherwise refer to any source the phenomena that show Will and Intellect. *Person* is no more limiting than *Being*: but it is deeper by the whole contents of the idea of consciousness. None of our abstract words for existence, continuance, immanence, meet the exactions of this problem; which is, that if we reach consciousness we must have started from something conscious, if we rise to volition it must be from the pressure of some source of Will, if we perceive and exercise intelligence the supply must have been derived from Intellect. Find a word that shall be a symbol of the vital coexistence of qualities whence our personal experience is derived.

Person ought to be the greatest, most venerable word: its equivalent in every language might supplant all the synonyms of God. For it says, I Am.

Its Latin etymology betrays that it once denoted the opposite of this, for *persona* was the mask used by Greek and Roman actors, who voiced their feigned emotions through it. It must be brought out of this disguise, and accede to kingly senses; for nothing is more real and positive, more legitimately heir to a throne, than the freedom of a man's Conscience, Intellect and Will. Nowadays the mask is the individual, through which the unfeigned person sounds.

When we say, an infinite Person, we do not suggest infinity within limits, but volition and intelligence without them. Neighbors have a trick of calling each other persons, when they mean people or individuals with Christian names; they are, therefore, unprepared to discover that every one of these people touches infinity with his least individual and limited qualities, those immediately derived from the divine freedom, and can furnish this freedom with its name. We need not be prevented, then, by common usage, from lifting all limits away from the word Person, that it may be competent to represent consciousness raised to infinity. If in-being had not been always Personal, it never would have been in any thing: or rather, nothing would have been. Each man's creative instinct is the continuous explanation of the origins of things.

The theologians dread the epithet *impersonal* because they are interested to sustain the old theories of special providences and interventions, and need an individual who can step spryly out and into history, and be on time to a second to modify the natural order with whimsical fertility of afterthoughts and supplements. This is the Napoleon-Paul-Pry of the super-

naturalists. Such a God is not a Person, but a creature as large as the scheme of supernatural dogmatics: certainly no more extensive than the earth and its chronology, and his chief use is to sustain the credit of miraculous narratives, and to prevent chimpanzees from aspiring to be men. Theology is right in saying that if God be called impersonal he is emptied of vitality and put into a row of forces. But when we call him a Person we do not share the anxiety of the theologian to have a definite Life for the sake of the plan of redemption. Miracles and irruptions have now been superfluous for a long time, as long as an infinite Person has existed. During that time he has imparted his original Unity to the finite order, and saved us the trouble and mortification of trying to eke out its uniformity.

In Goethe's poem, the gentle Margaret would fain commit Faust to a statement of belief in a God; but the poet's dread of limitations replies, that name is but sound and smoke o'er-misting heaven's glow. But when our highest integrity of life utters the name of its kinship with the infinite, every verbal dexterity falls off like manners of the individual in moments of profound sincerity, and the essence of the reality lets itself be touched.

This is not naming, but rather indicating by a symbol, the direction where in-being may be found. The old guide-board that insists only upon the name of the next town will set the traveller around the world. We are content with knowing what tendency opens at last into the space where the original of our own consciousness awaits us.

When two friends in old Greece parted, for journeying or war, a ring was severed, and each took half of it away with him. At their next meeting the first act, before a word would be spoken, was to fit the two halves together, and restore the symbol of their faithfulness. Our word *symbol* comes from that word, *sumballo*, to put together; and the Greek ring encircles the friendship that all signs have for truths.

So mankind, parting long ago from the unnamed Deity, went into the first turmoil and uncertainty of living, and appeared overborne and indifferent to that half of a pledge which had been exchanged, its latent capacity to make a Person out of an individual. The journey ends, the return is made, the affinity proclaimed with delight that absence sharpened, when the finite person, discovering himself, rounds himself against the infinite; the perfect faith is a perfect fit, and no words that pass can lend it any quality.

Did my life indeed ascend,
Or some Life sink down to me?
All I know, it was my friend:
Name it, shape it? Let that be.

When the individual sets whatever gift he has into personal freedom, recovering it from the whim and manner by which he is known among men, and is thought of by them as soon as his name is heard, he begins to build a consciousness of Deity, and to perceive that it is necessary to his life. No argument from nature, or from the marks of design in creation, can reach so high. Scientific method can demonstrate the unity and constant presence of divine intelli-

gence, but then has to wait for the individual to drop the key-stone of his personal freedom into that arch over which the finite and infinite pass to and fro.

A good deal of our time is spent in the ordinary life which we inherit from physical conditions; we cannot call it wasted time, for it piques us to recover our freedom, hampers and teases us as if on purpose to make us turn upon it and bid it respect the presence of a superior. Our most individual and least independent instincts grow huffy and important in the crowd that streams through the street, where each must jostle each for its right of way. I am John,—I am Peter: my time and interest are as valuable as yours; let me pass. What a passage, as of some migrating nomadic horde of conceits and assumptions, anxious to get into a fair pasture land to stake out their claim!—past we go, dickering in town politics, outwitting in caucuses, and subscribing money to buy up the floating vote; scrutinizing each other's motives, garments, food, and drink, with ridiculous phrases of mutual depreciation that are blown away by the first real benefit; jealously cheapening each other's goods, from a pound of spice to a lyric's flavor; dreading too much success, hawking at too high and smooth a wing: a mob of voices getting hoarse over the right to a cesspool, or the direction of a drain, or a millennial text; disputing in vestries about the numbers in Daniel, the spokes in Ezekiel's wheels, mutual goring with the horns of any apocalyptic beast; formidable scrupulousness about the cut of each other's nails, and stealthy watching behind the door of decencies to catch some one betraying his weakness; gath-

ering with cheap lanterns and brass to bid somebody's shiftiness show itself at the windows, and neatly recommend others to be shifty; zeal to favor a few isolated traits that express the soul's least estimable gifts, and to get each other baptized or placarded with them, to pass as such instead of upon our real, though remoter, value;—these civic tricks and prejudices hurry individuals through the world, as if a rescue by the Person were dreaded before the grave can be reached.

People live so close together that they spindle and suffer in the general strength of their character. Sometimes the injury makes them appear very ragged and unlovely; yet all the while they may be holding aloft in clear air topmost features which solicit the sun and rain of heaven. One who rides from South-West Harbor to Bar Harbor, in Mt. Desert, will see a grove in which the pines stand so close that all the branches have withered two-thirds of the way up the trunks, and are nothing but dead sticks, broken and dangling. But every tree bears close, each to each, its evergreen crown; and they seem to make a floor for the day to walk upon.

This pavement for the feet of heaven, more precious than the fancied one of New Jerusalem, stretches all around the world, above the thickets of our spiny egotism, where people run up into the only coherence upon which it is safe for Deity to tread.

But our life has not been so dismantled by mortality that we cannot find traces that Deity has dwelt here, and plainly intends to again: perhaps it is in the next room, and our hand has been so often on the latch, but some stir below forbade us to enter. When a blazing

hour scorches these packthreads which we call Society, and our freed members recover natural movements, so that we turn towards each other, break the armed truce of our conceits, and embrace in a fashion before unheard of in our polished isolation, so closely that all hearts transmit the one blood of which we are made, and a flush of conviction outruns the planet's dawn, — then we overtake the indwelling Freedom, set free into it our personal power, and become a unity that shares organic laws. It is an experience of that wholeness of gift and feeling to which a divine presence corresponds.

When the powerful vibrations of music shake down our bars, and we are released to each other, or the upliftings of great speech take our feet from the ground, and we can no longer stand braced in resistance, but conspire into the wave of the orator's persuasion, we are in the temper of Deity. It is never strange at such moments to find all the petty individuals believing in God, unconsciously translating the occasion into the conviction that gathers and crushes all the clusters of all souls. God is the cup that catches that life's wine. We taste our own unadulterated flavor.

A beautiful action wins a town's sympathy, and all the people exchange congratulations, having been so dazzled into forgetting surnames that they run together. The moral order of eternity is let through into time, and never returns. Individuals hold the door, but the stronger people get it open, and a Person enters with the quality or eminence of the moment. Moral routine that represses every individual trait for

the sake of a household, a town, a commonwealth, is not stunted by the narrowness and severity of the act, but the universal advantage seems to repay it, by contributing extent to the nature of the actor, together with all the symmetry which his sacrifice won from the dull material. This obscure moral service creates for the individual a personality as large as the neighborhood of souls who have been improved by him. He cannot occupy so much space without including a sense of Deity.

We are the persons who make this Person essential to us by living divinely. It is a deduction which develops when moral and spiritual gifts are set free: they pass into the certitude of a personal Will and Intelligence, because we have been living on that scale. The alternative is to sink back into the individual, and nurse its physical and animal predilections; the elements suffice for that, and the mind rises no higher than the notion of a Force.

It is essential for Religion to have not only the abstract term, a First Cause, that will satisfy the mind when it attempts to account for itself, its structure, its mode of activity, its relation to the world, but a divine Person, to be the mind's qualifying ground and substance, the personal unity that endows all the units with a sense of being persons. He is not only the cause of our being here, but He keeps us here, and everywhere, the essence of our mental and moral unity continually guaranteeing our structure, and reaching through that to proof of Himself in our private freedom. So that it is the sacredness of the individual that endows in-being with Personality. It

must become one of the organic truths of American Religion.

At this point, if at any in the argument, a claim might be admitted in favor of the instinct that the death of the body does not suspend or destroy personal continuance. It is objected, that no thought and feeling have ever yet been displayed independently of cerebral condition; they must have brain, either to originate or to announce them. If brain be source or instrument of human consciousness, what preserves it when the brain is dead? But there would have been no universe on such terms as that. What supplied infinite mind with its preliminary *sine qua non* of brain-matter? All worlds and objects are the lobes that waste and renew to express the moods of their Creator. Surely matter did not convene and organize for the production of a divine consciousness; and to suppose the contemporaneous eternity of both does not impair the advantage which our own will ascribes to a Creator's will.

To the scientific dictum, "No Mind without Brain," we are disposed to respond with the universe itself, that infinite equivalent to the phrase, "No Brain without Mind." And if the finite intellect shows marks of identity with the divine, by admitting and interpreting the laws of things and the unity of their development, it must be an identity that shares the creative advantage of finding its own brains. The universe teaches us that if one centre of force becomes dissipated, it is only a movement which creates another, and reestablishes its advantage. As fast as elementary forces are driven out of business, they set up afresh, and not one

bankruptcy occurs. No man need trouble himself to rise from the dead to tell us on a small scale what the heavens declare with a mighty fugue and interplay of voice. Through all its transformations the world always weighs the same, and not a spark of vital agency is filched. "To say that life is the result of organization is to say that the builders of a house are its results."

There is a great deal about an individual man that is not worth saving, and he will rejoice to be well rid of it at last, for it is a legacy from inferior structures, which he will eventually make superfluous. Heaven would be a menagerie if his tricks and gibberings got into it, a blustering amplification of traits which we already find intolerable. But they have not personal vitality enough to set up housekeeping in that other place, dear to the mythological heart; mankind's meanness has not yet grown viciously virile enough to start a hell, even had God a hankering for one.

We say of some men that they dare not or cannot call their souls their own. If it were true that they could not, owing to a structure that declined the task of becoming a person, or to one that represented rudimentary and idiotic conditions, it would be also true that God could not call them his. When we observe that some elephants are more sagacious than some men, the suspicion intrudes that they are more valuable by so much ivory, and that even a divine mind could not utilize the men. All the phenomena of trivial and sordid living deceive our own conceit into presuming that God has a preference for us. But what man is

good enough for God? Not one; but all the men are, and their number at any time is the precise equivalent of his preference, for the lowest unit of this collective mankind must have a germ of personality that reports his own failure to himself, in a very groping and forest fashion, doubtless, yet not destitute of expectation. Despair itself is an investment of the person.

The individual may become disintegrated without damage to the personality which resides in him to secure to the divine life some contact with him. Whatever apprehends or guesses that proximity must be at least as permanent as the matter of the world which shifts out and into physical conditions.

But we can leave this problem to take care of itself, for nothing is so sure as death. Nothing is surer than that either something or nothing succeeds death. Everybody will therefore be conscious quite soon, or be unconscious, that personal continuance is a vital fact. It is a waste of time to be over-curious or anxious about a solution which a few years will secure for our experience. For it is no more essential to good living to acquire some proof of life in the future than it is to prove metaphysically that we are alive in the present. If proofs or probabilities of immortality exist, they are so involved with truth of intellect and character, that they become identical with the fact that we are alive. What can enhance the reality of being actually alive?

The bare belief in a continued existence ennobles man less than the personality that secures the fact. It is the amount of his moral and spiritual character, and it is already possessed by crowds of disinterested peo-

ple who most vehemently deny that they have any corresponding instinct, and justly refuse to regulate their behaviors by the popular sentiments of reward and retribution that are connected with it. The most important thing is to become such persons of the universe that it would stint the plan, and be wasteful, to extinguish us.

Who does not become so? What arbiter will draw the line? What odious aristocrat of virtue can embezzle the universal opportunity?

“Oh, that a man might know
The end of this day's business, ere it come!
But it sufficeth that the day will end,
And then the end is known.”

Let us serenely resume the argument for the necessity of a divine Person.

Religion has always tried to endow the divine Personality with a consciousness that reaches through Will and Intelligence into a mood that corresponds to human sympathy. It is worth while to see if this be a permanent instinct of human nature which the facts can justify and our own personal relations can explain.

What becomes of the heart's old secret, that there is something like paternal regard for us, in this flood of common-sense that is beginning to cover all intelligent countries, to deposit facts and fruitful germs of truth about the divine order? Does the flood run down into the heart and drown out its secret, or is that left to brood there in the darkness, still alive, but languishing and growing bloodless every day for want of light and air? In former times there was hardly a circumstance that

did not help to feign a personal sympathy of God for man. Some divine agency had the contract to furnish corn and wine, to keep the pestilence subdued, to blunt the arrows of the elements, to provide antidotes to all poisonous things. Men trusted to a fatherly interference. If, notwithstanding this, they continued to suffer, the fact did not disturb their faith, because it was immediately interpreted to be a sign of the aversion and anger of the ruling power; and they cast about to discover what could have been the cause of the aversion, to remove it, if possible, and restore the ordinary comfort and immunity. Worship began in this effort to propitiate the invisible, and to make atonement for real or fancied sins. For men have always cherished a fond notion that heaven takes regular and unremitting care of them; the more ignorant they are, the more uncompromisingly is this interest attributed to a God. Children confide, and give themselves right up to the parent; sensible of their own inadequateness to meet the wants of their organization, they make over the whole business to superior intelligence, with a sweetness and loyalty that always endow that intelligence with love, even where that attribute is very scanty or does not exist at all.

Now the case is altering every day. Knowledge of invariable causes and effects has gone on, dislodging a divine person from one fact after another, driving it to the rear, disenchanting everything, and substituting consistent operation in the place of personal care. This has made the art of living vastly more easy, but it has made the problem of the Infinite Father more difficult to solve. For with all our increase of comfort, superi-

ority to physical influences, ability to detect and baffle whatsoever is injurious to us, it is just as pathetic as ever to be alive ; we are just as likely to become actors in some tragedy that tells how a body or a soul may be discomfited, with no help for it, so far as we can see, from any paternal interference, as the old Hebrew was who thought his fathers had eaten sour grapes, or the old Greek who believed the same doctrine and called it Fate. We know enough about natural and moral causes to perceive, very often when it is too late, that our help would have been in avoiding something, or accepting something. "If we had only known at the time," we say. But how futile and irrational that is, with all its show of reason. It is "a ship's stern-light that illuminates nothing but the wake."

If the Algerines had only known, a few years ago, that certain districts would be famine-stricken, they might have decamped : but staying on where they were, and expecting the annual average of rain, it happened that mothers became cannibals, and served up their children as the old Jewish mothers did during the siege of Titus. Providence must seem to a great many miserable persons like a state of siege : they have eaten every thing from meat to vermin and old leather, gnawed themselves barefoot and swallowed the saddles upon which they rode : yet the enemy still holds the lines of hunger. The miserable people totter to their battlements of belief, and scan the horizon for succor : sometimes they see a cloud of dust no bigger than a man's hand, and sometimes the landscape has the cruel smile of emptiness. Which is the Heavenly Father, the advancing cloud that does not always succeed in sweep-

ing off the enemy, or the barren outlook that does not even show a pretence of relief?

In reducing life to rule we have ruled out the personal sympathy of the Lord of Life. How many ages went down on their knees before the cause of thunder, to make interest in behalf of their effects and dwellings: but it blasted on every hand according to a will of its own, and rolled deafening against all human expostulations. Now comes along Poor Richard, the apostle of Common Sense, puts his knuckle to a key that dangles at the wire-end of a kite, and down comes the mystery, hauled to earth by a plaything. Of what use are prayers? God says virtually, "A rod to conduct is more to the point — prayers at any rate are out of fashion." But the rod will also play its tricks, so that half mankind is undecided whether it invites or disarms the fluid. When a rusty nail or an imperfect connection is discovered, the survivors of a house that has been struck exclaim, "Oh, if we had only known it in time!" How inexorable, then, is the Infinite Care. The weather that helps the crops to grow, and fills the woods and fields with gladness for all flower-hunters and those who linger hand in hand with friendship, has rotted away the rod at its connection, and the bolt leaps into a cradle. What have we gained with all our knowledge? It has made our life in some respects more tragic than ever, for it has imported new elements into the pursuit of comfort and intelligence. Steam carries a hundred midnight sleepers, women and children, to a spot where a snake-head waits for them, and over they go, with but a shriek between sleep and death: then fire licks and swallows them. Is it not as

tragic as a day before the walls of Troy? Less noble, because not caused by the daring to death of men who are wide awake and measuring their dangers with every glance: but far more piteous, far more accusing to our faith in the divine order. We can stand a tragedy that steps forth in garments rolled in the blood of our own self-surrender. When a thousand negroes are willing to follow Shaw up the glacis of Fort Wagner, to dig with bayonets their own glorious grave together in the heat of that fraternal patriotism, we deliberately prefer the absence of the divine interference; or we hail the tragedy itself as the divine presence emphasizing itself and announcing its regard for the country's future. But at any rate the thousand graves grow green with our heart's spring-feeling, and not a house in the republic now regrets the blood it furnished. But when somebody invents the compound called nitro-glycerine, and commercial greed ships it to a populous port neglecting the cautiousness that is proclaimed and reiterated by all the freaks of the elements, we call the result a massacre; the piteousness of it recoils upon Providence: we forget all the tender texts, and the next time we go to sea, or take passage by the rails, we consider that we have taken shares in a great consolidated lottery, quite aware that our number may draw a blank.

This, however, we have settled: mankind has suffered enough to settle that there is an invariable effect to every invariable cause, and that it is better to approximate as fast and far as possible to finding what it is. But this very tendency has an effect, too, upon the religious sensibility, to deaden its old-fashioned idea

that there is something personal just the other side of all phenomena, something that manifests itself but is distinct from the manifesting, — that does things glad or grievous, but is not the same things itself, not swallowed up and lost in them, not laws and forces, but a lawgiver and a fountain of force: an Infinite Will that wills everything finite, but that does it all the time with some sort of personal apprehension and feeling, in a condition of being that corresponds in some way to our words love, pity, oversight, sympathy, considerateness. We are on the road to discover that God's most perfect considerateness was shown by him in the original devising of the laws of the world; but the knowledge that is showing this drifts in the direction of emptying all personal feeling out of this original devising, until the considerateness appears as hard as a contract which a man takes to clothe and victual an army, to run a machine to the greatest profit at the least expense, to govern a school by system and not by personal character. The heart recoils from this to such an extent that a great many people, influenced by reaction against the cold, mechanical theory of the universe, refuse to know any thing more, do not care to follow the steps of intelligence, cry out for love and grasp at the straw of a church, at any thing that will float them to the old shore where they are sure a Heavenly Father is waiting to soothe them. When sorrow thunders at the cliffs and the tide of pathos steals in to cover all the meadows, they climb into the highlands of an Infinite bosom; they are sure it will not reach them there: it laps their feet — it will not reach their waist: it is waist-deep — but it will not

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overflow the lips. It does—it fights at the threshold of the lips with psalms of confidence, and strangles the last entreaty. What can a church do, or a creed that is stuffed with the tenderest words in the language? If there are moments when the Father is only inevitableness, what can religion do for us in this direction?

We attempt to free ourselves from this embarrassment by showing how the facts themselves are all religious. Knit at the four corners, the order of God descends, full of all manner of grand and creeping things, and we wake up to declare that nothing is common or unclean. We perceive how many evils are only states of imperfect development that make the perfect plan more clear: they are gospels that proclaim the purpose. And all the sciences come to us loaded with specimens of every sort that fit into a plan; the gaps fill up so fast and the symmetry grows so evident that we do not mind the other gaps: the soul rises into a feeling of confidence, stretches forth its exploring hand into the darkness and feels a warm hand everywhere. The more it knows the more it confides. This is the very essence of Religion. That word must not be used to represent nothing but our longing to be pitied and comforted. It expresses the consolation that confidence imparts. Is there any other kind? You feel as a child does whose parents have called in the old physician, whose lost cases have never shaken the confidence that people pay to a perfect intention and to the highest reach of skill. The suffering child begins to rally in the happiness of that abject confidence born of the parents' deliberate experience. So the progress of knowledge recruits Religion. And

from this to a faith in an infinite source of friendship there is but a step.

The step into that faith is made by human nature when it perceives that God befriends it through its friends, of its own flesh and blood. If all other proofs should fail to restore Personality to the Infinite Intelligence, this private test of friendship does it: for we say, If there is something above and distinct from myself that comes blessing me in the shape of my friendship, it must be an Infinite Friendliness. No invariable natural processes are capable of that: they are impersonal, they have neither praise nor blame, sympathy nor aversion; the relation between a man and the order of nature is the same as that between heat and cookery, an engine and the power that drives it. It would be just as impossible for caloric to indulge fraternal warmth as for the inevitable and consistent force of the world to have a partiality for its victims. Where, then, do you get your human friend from: must he not be derived from some primitive element of friendliness, or is this most precious of all motives self-generated? Is it merely the fondling among a herd of brains that prowl and browse in the jungles of life, or has atomic affinity mustered to our blood to light these fire-signals upon mutual cheeks, and are these graspings of hands the ultimate effect of cohesion, this attractiveness nothing but a surplus of the magnet's spell? We are bold enough to suspect a divine breath in the sweet clover and new hay; we delight to pretend that the trees stand straight in a life beneath, and the wild animals fill the forests with suggested instincts and not their own. Let us be as

generous to our best emotions. Whenever the notion of fatalism breaks out of the routine of nature, and gets into the mind to set up there the image of an indifferent and pantheistic God, the next friend who does us a favor out of pure love, who opens a vein and bids us hold a heart that he may drain away into it, fills the heavens and earth with himself, and invents friendship for God.

The moral actions that are inspired by love are the correctives of the materialism which is undoubtedly nourished by our knowledge of so many laws and facts. When we put God into every thing, his personality becomes entangled: or when we put every thing into God, it is a pure mental gesture that embarrasses his distinctness from the effects that he produces. Things are infinite, and yet we must contrive some way of having God infinitely different from his things. We might swathe him with his universe till he became a mummy. We might crush out his personality with the weight of his ornaments. Our conscience has freedom enough of its own to be convinced that God must be free also: and that idea includes his personal distinctness from every thing that he felt free to make. Our being is in Him: his being is in us — yet he is One and we are others. It seems to me that Love is a good solver of this problem, if we fail to find law for it. Love sometimes threatens to make us more hopelessly pantheistic than ever, as we feel that love makes us one with each other and one with God. All things seem swallowed up in unity: landmarks are obliterated; all the fences are taken down, and rights of property cannot be distinguished. At that very mo-

ment God's Person becomes more distinct than ever: he is the source from which this unity flows and to which it loves to return.

Whose idea was it that we should have friends and lovers, believers in ourselves, protectors of the heart against the ills of cause and effect, our champions for better and worse, who stand up for us when God's consistency appears to be trying to put us down, and so inspire us with the sense of a higher consistency that we cannot detect anywhere in nature, whose purpose is to use us up in a perfectly legal but sometimes very objectionable fashion? Where does the charity come from that believeth, hopeth, and endureth all things? "Do you say that God has abandoned my husband to his habits?" said a wife to a professional comforter, — "then it is high time that I should stand up for him and see him through. I will be God for him, if God is of your mind." What a taste of a divine Person who is distinct from the laws of habit! One might say that God already had advantages enough in the operations of his natural laws: how various and supreme they are, and how the good counterbalances the evil! — but in the love of such a lover as that, God first becomes richer than his universe, and steps out of its complications into the reserve of Person. In that reserve there is our supplement of love.

Will you not have a God at least as big as a man or woman who loves you? Not as fine as your own finest conception of pity, sympathy, championship, relationship? The pantheist has inverted the telescope with which he scours the heavens, and God comes out at the little end: he becomes a vanishing God, a pigmy

in the diminishing perspective. Here is a brave, ample, determined, whole-souled friend standing at your elbow on his two substantial feet, a man or a woman who is all aflame for you with human nature, expressly commissioned to atone for every disaster, and to make you forget both man and Providence when they are churlish. And here, through the telescope, is a dot of a source of friendship, with no personal friendliness in it!

Perhaps we object that we can have an actual experience of our friend, but we have no similar experience of the proximity of any divine source of friendship, and cannot pretend to have, however much we try to lift ourselves into the mystical rapture of such a union. That is because we have been taught unnatural ways of approaching God, by prayers and phrases: a form of worship, we are told, is the only ladder that will take us up through the scuttle into the illimitable air. But we find God by staying in the house that all our natural gifts have built around us. He comes and dwells with us in them. And if we would turn to speak to him it must be through the channels of his presence. When all our gifts conspire with God we share an ecstasy of creativeness, compared with which the raptures of the lean and yellow mystics are the maunderings of typhus-fever. Try God by way of your whole nature, and see if this age of intelligence be not still capable of detecting something divine. Do at least as much as you do towards your friend: try a little mutuality. For no man can have a friend or lover gratis: he continues for us on the strength of our own seeking, our own striving, our

faithfulness and sense of needing him. When we pay out something towards the invisible Friendship, through the fragrance of blossoming gifts, and not with the counterfeits of liturgies and violent assertions of homage, sneaking and importunate teasing for special providences, we shall find that the principle of mutuality is most perfect, most captivating and soul-sufficing in the direction of the primitive source of all our human mutualities. Friendship is spontaneous, magnetic, subject to the laws of affinity, no doubt: but in all affinities there are two parties. Is God the only party in the universe who is left out of this chance for an affinity? We shall have an answer to that question when we have recovered from our theological dyspepsia, and cease to make our bad breath an offence in his nostrils. Let the whole nature turn consciously towards Him, so that the sincerity of all thoughts, passions, and emotions shall remind his infinite friendship of itself, and earth be heaven's comrade.

Does any suggestion come out of the infinite like this? "You have got to like me whether you wish to or not, for in me you live and move and have your being. I am, if the personal pronoun may be used, your great, immanent, pantheistic, No-otherness. Come—or if coming be too strong a word in a case where there is no Person to come to, stay, as we are, together. I am like the juggler's bottle: draw what tap you please. Call for pity, love, comfort, indignation: it is all the same to my indefinite sameness. Indeed, you *must* take something."

The cure for this is in the broad and positive living

that is carried on by human nature. The old prescription was to seek God by isolated piety; men were told to lift their souls into personal communion by some single gift of prayer, of meditation, of remote abstraction. You might as well prescribe to a man who is standing in a basket to lift himself by taking hold of the handles. If the whole soul does not go forth to its Creator, all the single gifts will lag behind, and the fancy will be deceived by much straining and mimicry of aspiration. When a man healthily fulfils the uses to which God would put him he finds the object of his worship, for God is coextensive with his nature. The dancing Dervish spins around himself to the point of vertigo, then sinks exhausted in a kind of swoon which passes for assimilation with the Deity. He comes out of it as light-headed as he went in; and this is the usual result of isolated gestures which pretend to unite the finite with the infinite. Has not God already suggested the terms on which he will yield himself? They are the nature in men and women perfectly developed and harmonized by health. If the whole of a man expresses God, then nothing short of the whole can find Him.

Wherever a few neighbors live together within the sound of each other's troubles, they do not need to overhear each other when invoking the infinite compassion. The invocation is all wasted breath, for the compassion is already with them in the opportunities of human friendship. And there is no man so despised, whether justly or not, who is without a friend who gives him a lift, picks him from the gutter, helps him to regain his feet from some staggering disap-

pointment. Some counsel rallies to some exigency, some partisan to some defence. All the peopled places of the earth are provided with this friendly coöperation, which is the most effective kind of divine intervention, and an answer that never failed to the outbursts of human anguish. God hears by all the ears he has provided. And if a man's complaint, in desert places, upon islands in desolate seas, or on the famine-stricken raft, does not reach an ear it does not reach the divine interference. Where there is no friend the agony exhales in prayers: the sea swallows it, the whirling sand-columns of the desert overtake it, and leave bleaching bones to mark the absence of God's opportunity. All shipwrecks and disasters that prove fatal, notwithstanding agonized entreaties flung heavenward, because no human help is near, only prove the general intent of heaven to manifest its pity by some friend. A man's distress converts an indifferent neighbor to a brother. Many a wilful soul that has gone far astray, and earned the detestation of society, becomes at length an embodied prayer, though only curses may pass the lips; and some innocent heart acknowledges the eloquent appeal, and, drawing near to lift up the battered and distorted character, hears its first religious confession, as it is surprised into saying, "Oh, then I see God has still some pity for me!" What promise of a Comforter is equal to the performance of human compassion!

VII.

AN AMERICAN ATONEMENT.

IF we reject the ordinary inferences which theology draws from the doctrine of a divine Person, all of which can be defined as assumptions that His mode of operation does not invariably follow the lines of His own laws, let us see if the country can make any use of the theory that reconciliation of man with God is the central act of Religion. It supposes that man has fallen away from a vital connection with the source of spiritual health, and that he becomes religious by reëstablishing the relation, for damaging which he alone is responsible. To give such a theory any reputation, it is necessary to impute feelings to God that are purely human, and belong to the kitchen furniture of the individual, — that he is exorable, or willing to modify his intentions at human entreaty; that he is placable, also that he is implacable; that he withdraws from people who offend or thwart him, and returns when the offender relents and abandons his posture; behaving generally like a human father of not the most magnanimous and elevated type.

This gross anthropomorphism has been the result of the mind's taking refuge in texts, whenever it is per-

plexed at the phenomena of physical and moral evil, instead of in the information that science furnishes of an immutable and consistent government of the world. In this respect, the monotheism of the Old Testament is far from being homogeneous. Sometimes the Lord has the passions and caprices of a gigantic man : he repents having made the other men ; he crushes enemies, and exacts the pound of flesh ; he is jealous ; he counts the incense, and marks if its perfume be rare ; he is open to various inducements to condone offences. Sometimes the later page soars above this fetichistic smoke of sacrificial fat, into the serene space where Cleanthes sung his hymn to the Supreme. But the Scriptures never forget to assume that man must be reconciled to God, while God is reconciled to man by some vicarious project that preserves the self-respect of justice.

But phrases which are suggested by ancient texts only perpetuate ancient misunderstandings. They are no better than the abstract terms of philosophers who try to account for things before science has equipped their minds. A new country must let these drain away, together with oligarchic dogmas, through the great cloaca of the past.

We must find a practical sense in which Religion is the act or state of man's reconciliation with God, because we are conscious that a variance is set on foot in the world itself, which is full of things that cry aloud to be reconciled. Left to themselves, they whimper not one word of justification. They appear so contradictory to human ideas of help and providence, that they would be considered impossible, if experience did not personally report them to us. What is their ori-

gin, we ask in some dismay, and how can a perfect intelligence sustain them? When, for instance, we perceive the fact of the inequality of human conditions, and how irreconcilable it is with our fraternal ascription of impartiality to God, we say, Is the fault in our ascription?

In Mr. Thackeray's novel of "The Newcomes," there is a scene where the noble but unfortunate hero of his book sits in the pauper's gallery during divine service, having come at last to that complexion, notwithstanding a disinterested life; and over his cowering, weather-beaten head rolls the grand assertion of the liturgy, "I have been young, and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." The anthem reverberates against its own refutation in the gallery, and can hardly retain countenance in men's minds for its generous assumption that things ought to be, at least, as it declares they are.

Vulgar opulence fills the street from wall to wall of the houses, and begrudges all but the gutter to everybody whose sleeve is a little worn at the elbows. Long careers of vice, that prosper even in their epitaphs, make cemeteries seem ridiculous, and death any thing but a leveller. Some one ventures to allude to a compensating hereafter, hinting that Dives will there change places with Lazarus, to find Cerberus too disdainful to lick his sores, and Lazarus not eager to overheat himself with running to fetch him water. We should be surer of this future balancing of the books, if we could reason from traces of analogy in a number of cases of such exemplary compensation in the present

life ; but if we could, our higher motives would refuse to accept a justification that merely turned upon shifting the saddle from the beast to the rider. Misery cannot long exult in opportunities to make other people miserable. The theologians, who derive their whole scheme of heaven from the petty spite that sometimes crows and capers here, derive it from a feeling that is more irreconcilable with God than all the misery and all the vice ; and it is one of which mankind is heartily ashamed, though we have heard of one venerable dame of orthodoxy who said, "Some folks think that a good many people will be saved, but we hope for better things." If all hunchbacks could plant their humps between the shoulders of all their deriders, the world would have one moment of a resounding Ha-ha ! to see accounts so happily squared. But the next moment would express the pity of a God, and we should hear every man anxiously reclaiming his hump, as an evil inferior to the mortification of seeing it upon another. Flourishing vulgarity is more unconscious than wicked ; a destitute refinement is a great deal more capable of bearing malice.

But what is vice itself but another mark of inequality of human conditions ? One man is born of unhealthy parents, littered in some inclement corner, and left to forage in the streets. His hunger is appeased by a kind of diet that propagates the diseases of his blood. When he is exasperated into committing offences against society, we lock him up ; but this is not a religious act that reconciles him with the moral order. It only protects the neighborhood while he nurses his destructive skill, and waits to be restored to

the opportunities of using it. There are born burglars who cherish a professional pride, and long to earn the approbation of distinguished cracksmen ; they discuss in prison their arts, as Cicero in his Tusculan villa broached questions of divination with his stoic friends. The congenital peculiarity becomes a fate to arrange the whole checkered career of detection and impunity. Who is responsible for this?

If a man is profligate enough to take advantage of the lightheadedness which sometimes afflicts a starving and forsaken woman, both his profligacy and her misfortune need to be reconciled with the purity of God. The Social Evil is a double-headed clamor against heaven. And we put another tongue into its accusation, when we make an outcast of the woman, and a tolerated nuisance of the man.

Not vice alone, but ignorance that is defenceless, upbraids the divine impartiality. Early in the sixteenth century the continent of Africa was found to be a prolific hot-bed of beings who wore the full shape of manhood without its full intelligence ; they instantly piqued the necessities of commerce and labor, which have ever since spun this helplessness into ties for holding kingdoms together. The slaver dropped his anchor off the fringe of that ignorance, and took it on board as freight : the black heart hunted the black skin, and infected a whole continent with delayed justice. No other tribes of men could have remained abject long enough to force such retributions from heaven. Did God construct this peculiar type of ignorance in order to extort at last peculiar vengeance ; to tempt sagacious cupidity, so that three centuries of

oppression might be signalized by the miseries of the weak and the degradations of the strong? When this asks to be reconciled with our feeling of the divine paternity, religion is frustrated by its own texts. "Like as a father pitieth his children" sounds ironically, and "God hath made of one blood all men" becomes degraded into a fact of physiology. "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy-laden," on the lips of priests in St. Domingo, and of bishops in Virginia, has had a queer touch of the auction-block in it, as of a highest bidder collecting together the women and children who have been knocked down to him. Religion must perceive that its finest texts have only furnished sedatives to mankind, which has come out of each narcotic drowse to find its trouble aggravated.

Not to multiply the instances which make history appear to be only a late afterthought and rectification of divine justice, in its struggle to repair deficiencies in the practical effect of nature and circumstance, it is safe to say that the whole structure of society is an indictment which religion must quash, or be put into the bar to be judged by a moral sense that is superior to the evils which it has accused.

Religion has undertaken to reply by methods that have only given emphasis to ignorance. Its explanations have been additional evils. Upon a man whose blood is poisoned it has only conferred the sad consistency of showing that he could not help his vice, or could not help incurring it. For if men have spoiled themselves by their own fault, theology cannot make it clear that they could have helped it, because a part of the fault may be justly referred to the constitution

which gave men a fatal tendency towards spoiling themselves. It is useless to struggle, by forms of speech and elaborate systems of doctrine, against that supposed error in the divine plan, by which men, through ignorance and passion, have made free to degrade themselves, and by doing this to force God to resort to schemes of reconstruction and atonement.

What reply can theology make to the natural protest of mankind against the evils which have infested it since men drew breath? No legends of the fall of man by an act of his free will can satisfy man's instinct that reconciliation with God means something different from undoing God's own work and substituting for it a scheme of salvation. God undertakes a piece of work that does not need undoing. He does not spin a web by day, which, like Penelope, he must unravel by night, to postpone the loss of his sovereignty. If we try to think well of God by thinking ill of the men he has made, we are irreligious. What is there in the whole expanse of the universe that can compare with the different tribes and people he has made, who, naturally enough, prefer light to darkness, tend to rejoice in the warmth of the sun and the inbreathing of oxygen that repairs their blood as fast as it deteriorates? This is a symbol of the atmosphere their souls inhale. If it is still worth while to keep the word Religion in the human family, to represent a tendency that was strong enough to ennoble the past in spite of its unnatural doctrines, and is the hope of a wiser future, we must show that there is a better way of binding men to God than by assuming that they are not fit for it by nature. We tie them neck

and heels with the strands of that doctrinal fiction, and then fasten them into a pew to listen to a service that is only an apology for God's defects.

The theology that posits enmity between man and God, no matter by whose fault, must assume that God cannot be content until his sovereignty is acknowledged. He has been offended, he demands reparation; his sense of justice cannot tolerate the wrongs he has suffered at the hands of men. But as mankind itself is not large enough to satisfy the claim of an infinite justice, infinity itself must be the liquidation of its own debt. In other words, reduced to plain absurdity, God himself atones for the injuries which he has received. He does not remit or condone them, still less pass them over, but he is entangled in the awkwardness of paying a just bill which he knew could not be paid when he brought it in: in fact, only brought it in for the superfluous object of paying it himself. William Blake said of the Atonement: "It is a horrible doctrine: if another man pay your debt, I do not forgive it."

Theology of the atoning kind is derived from a misinterpretation of the sacrificial history of the race. As a victim has always bled to expiate or to propitiate, the theologian concludes that a yearning forecast of mankind quenches its thirst at length in the blood of a Redeemer, to whose veins the whole logic of creation has been gathering, from its barest and most distant members, till a divine heart lends it a pulse of explanation and atonement. Then every offering and victim that has testified to a human desire for reconciliation becomes justified, but at the same time

superseded, by the Victor-Victim, and the course of sacrifice is complete. In this way, a history, that is really a succession of human escapes from the fetichistic idea that substitutes of all sorts can pay man's debts and keep the invisible appeased, is interpreted to be a succession of human anticipations of a genuine sacrifice that grow more and more emphatic, till the time is ripe and the victim full grown. Just when the "Lamb of God" became a harmless figure of speech, in texts whose mediatorial rhetoric had no idea of spilling blood, it was exaggerated into an infinite fact and slaughtered, so far as phrases and councils could do it, for a mankind that had outgrown the need of it. And nothing is left of the ancient sacrificial error but the vague subjective sentiment which is created by these phrases. Man is discovering his own structural, personal, and immediate connection with the infinite, and learns fast that the laws of his own nature must take away his sins. If they do not, then nothing else, though slain from the foundations of the world, can accomplish it.

The notion that a primitive custom must indicate a natural necessity, because it has been gradually developed and refined, might as well legitimate other obsolete manners of the human race. All old customs are not the tide-gauges of real latent tendencies that creep towards their height; many of them are rather the obstructions of an early coast-line, which the tide would fain desert and overflow, as it extricates itself and mounts to clearness. Thus the tendency to account for the world, to rationalize its phenomena, and to reach a deduction of the relation between the creat-

ure and creator, carried barbarism on its bosom for ages, and has not even now thrown off the perilous stuff. We value the customs as marks of a mental struggle, not as signs of intimate spiritual correlation. As soon might we advocate some gymnastic method of stealing our wives, by making matrimonial raids on the next town and taking them from unwary relatives, because savages procured women by dragging them off by the hair, amid the resistance of an outraged clan. It might be confirming to discover highly evangelical traces of this primitive revelation among people who still provoke a pitched battle to get women away from their tribe or family. We might pursue the gradual amelioration of this practice, through scenes of mock combat, running-matches, bloodless surprises, feigned reluctance of the women, symbolic substitutes, till nothing is left of the aboriginal skirmish but an old shoe to be tossed after the departing bride. "That, indeed, is going too far," orthodoxy might say: "that is the way liberalism has treated the Atonement by running the serviceable truth down at the heel, and then expending with immense demonstration of genuine sacrifice what is not worth being kept. But see, in this matter of marriage, how development itself justifies some recourse to violence. We have reached an Altar-form of sacrifice, let us have the halter style of wooing. By returning to the divine theory of ravishment, let us suppress altogether this increasing infidelity of Christless people, who would win the love of a whole family in order to win their too willing wives."

The old tendency to forcible marriage involves a

necessity of human nature as much as the old dogmatic forms of sacrifice.

In the famous letter which Pliny wrote to Trajan, that describes his dealings with the Christians in Bithynia, he mentions that the superstition is widely spread, but that he can report some improvement, and says, "Victims are again on sale, purchasers having been very difficult to find." No doubt the early Christians found it more economical, as well as Scriptural, to substitute Christ for the sacrifices of the temple-services. For though the idea of an Atonement did not assume a dogmatic form till long after, it was gathered from the apostolic epistles, and taken for granted by the popular Christian feeling. So the old pagan notion survived in this form, to be transferred to modern Europe. Purchasers have never been difficult to find; all people who relish the idea of offering up somebody, other than themselves, to satisfy the infinite justice, will subscribe to the ecclesiastical system that preserves this reminiscence of heathendom.

We must not, however, forget to notice that modern atoning schemes resort to justifying themselves to human nature, by appearing to reintroduce the divine Love into a system impaired by sin, like air into an ill-ventilated house. But the Love already pervades all professions, arts, and labors, and is the ideal against which the imperfections declare themselves and appeal for remedy. The densest body has pores which invite its ingress. If a man calls at my door with a patent portable case of atmosphere, I have only to open the window to bid him pack, to dis-

cover and inhale the blessing he pretended to bring.

To be a finite being is no crime, and to be the Infinite is not to be a creditor. As man was not consulted, he does not find himself a party in a bargain, but a child in the household of Love. Reconciliation, therefore, is not the consequence of paying a debt, or procuring atonement for an injury, but an organic process of the human life.

Man begins to be reconciled with God when he learns the laws of things and accommodates himself to them. Take a few simple cases for illustration.

A person finds it utterly irreconcilable with his idea of a God that he should have inherited some vicious propensity. Another person finds it equally irreconcilable that his structure leaves him able to originate a vice, and transmit it to his children. But as soon as these people feel so, their reconciliation with God has begun: they have an ideal which makes them conscious of the discrepancy, and sets them to work to reduce it, by using that law of their nature which expresses the full purpose of God. It is the same law of the divine nature that subsidizes universal evil to justify its mode of operation, in furtherance of a creating plan. Whether these persons succeed or not in this redemption, does not affect the fact that they are religious only when they substitute this method of obedience to their own law for any verbal statements or beliefs in schemes. They bind themselves to God by a natural tie of likeness to Him; remorse is the natural pain at the discovery that the tie is threatened or enfeebled, spiritual joy is the natural mood of a

return to harmony. The tendency feels contented when it is gratified.

A person finds it irreconcilable with his instinct concerning God, that he should have been born in ignorance and wretchedness, a prey to poverty, the victim of cunning or tyranny. Perhaps he is so little able to help himself that his only spiritual life is resignation. He is doomed to that when he feels secretly entitled to the satisfaction of all his human wants. These compose his natural law. And they are claims of his vested in more fortunate individuals, who are thus instinctively brought to his side. Reconciliation with God begins through the religious action of these persons who perceive what is the natural law of every human being. The true mediatorial scheme is the interference of practical sympathy, which appears in charitable, social and political influence. Thus his own law is liberated, and he too can begin religion by applying this ready-made element of reconciliation to other souls.

The laws of things are the material of the right thinking in which religion has its root. Right living is derived from them alone. A part of this right thinking consists of the active moral tendency that emphasizes the health, sanity, and righteousness that is in all things. What a reconciler of man with God is Social Science, and what an atoner for every original taint! It directly attacks the evils which prevent mankind from becoming truly religious, and proclaims the right theology — that bad living of all kinds nourishes this hypochondria of a feud between earth and heaven. Beginning at the very root, it shows that

imperfect ventilation is symbolical of all the rest of the irreligiousness that keeps mankind disconsolate by making so much corrupted blood. Whatever disturbs the proper aeration of the contents of the lungs puts men in training for any kind of craze. For poisoned blood infects the brain with poisoned thought and feeling. Bad air, bad food, bad drink, alters the blood-disks, and suborns for villainy the finest structures. Therefore Social Science begins a true vicarious mission by the expressive and beautiful action of cutting windows in dead walls, to let the sky fall through into Stygian apartments; of establishing draughts that carry off noxious vapors and admit the close pursuing air, well cooked by the sun's actinic ray. Then its ban is put upon bad meats and unwholesome tricks in the preparation of food. Thirty miles of tubing in the skin are cleared out, and the sewerage of the human system established, so that every internal organ sheds baseness by insensible transpiration. Light, air, and water, that undoctinal Trinity, threefold Unity that makes and sustains the world, casts out from the brains of its children their legion of devils: the very swine flourish by cleanness enough to refuse to let them enter. There is nothing with a love of impurity so ingrained as to take them in. So that men and women are seen glorifying God by sitting clothed and in their right mind. What recorded triviality of miracle can match the vast power of this simple spell of natural religion!

Reconciliation is the assumption or recovery by all organs and tendencies of their proper action. What a religious ecstasy is health! Its free step claims every

meadow that is glad with flowers; its bubbling spirits fill the cup of wide horizons and drip down their brims; its thankfulness is the prayer that takes possession of the sun by day, and the stars by night. Every dancing member of the body whirls off the soul to tread the measures of great feelings, and God hears people saying, "How precious also are thy thoughts, how great is the sum of them; when I awake I am still with thee." Yes, — "when I awake," but not before: not while the brain is saturated with venous blood, till it falls into comatose doctrines and goes maundering with its attack of mediatorial piety and grace; not while a stomach, depraved by fried food, apothecary's drugs, and iron-clad pastry (that target impenetrable by digestion), supplies the constitution with its vale of tears, ruin of mankind, and better luck hereafter. When all my veins flow unobstructed, and lift to the level of my eyes the daily gladness that finds a gate at every pore; when the roaming gifts come home from Nature to turn the brain into a hive of cells full of yellow sunshine, the spoil of all the chalices of the earth beneath and the heavens above, — then I am the subject of a Revival of Religion: she wakes the brooding thought to observe that the whole man, from the crown of the head to the sole of the feet, and all the tender, bitter, glorious things that transpire within that compass, are reconciled to God.

Let the ideal impulse, which clothes itself in the forms of art, rejoice to have left behind whole galleries of pictures, which age is blackening for their libels upon the divine nature. Mankind will be fortunate

if Calvinistic gloom, and the "agony of impotence" of the Catholic ascetic, have fallen out of the moral sense by the time those painted outrages have rotted from their frames. What can a robust country do with those hospital silhouettes of saints, save perhaps to preserve them for warnings in museums of morbid anatomy, as *lusus naturæ*, whose malformation is a halo?

The country itself is a Consolator, colored too heartily for the thin-blooded palette of Scheffer, whose central figure seems to say to the miserable groups: "I'm sorry for you, but you see how melancholy I look, and that must be your comfort." Liberty shores up the bruised reed, binds up the broken hearts, and summons every oppressed spirit into the natural deliverance of health, usefulness, and glad coöperation. On the freshly-stretched canvas of American landscapes plenty of *Ecce Homos* breathe and live, who hide their wounds lest they fill the eyes of beholders with a mediæval pity, and blur the strong lines that the muscles wrested from daylight and expectation. The heads droop with the weight of smiles gathered from new-mown fields.

And though Dantes are scarce, there are plenty of Beatrices who draw manhood up to substantial paradises without flattening their womanhood into the lacklustre sanctity of the painter; such a Beatrice as he has drawn would make us first ashamed of Dante, that such a sexless tenuity could hold his paradise suspended. The fine art of healthy living must furnish well-grown subjects to the Muses of America.

A great deal of anxious thought is given to the diffi-

cult problem of the Social Evil, which drains religion out of men and women by the way of their life-blood, and leaves them flaccid and corrupted. How can it be reconciled with that artless intention of Nature's procreative force, which, as it reaches personality in the reserve of woman, suggests the divine purity? The question is no sooner asked than Social Science, leaving to the police the pastime of arresting female street-haunters and letting their male dangles go free, undertakes the business of a real reconciliation, by advocating conditions that will make woman the mistress of an honorable and unassailable position. When she gains that, by finding avenues of labor open to her that are now choked by men, so that she can show she is deserving of a man's wages for doing a man's work, as she already does in many a school-house and counting-room, she will become the mistress of her person. Her natural law revolts at her own degradation, and agonizes to be reconciled with God. What can she do for herself? Stand out of the way, and let her see. Let every door aswing: she will approach it, look in, and enter if she sees that the work inside corresponds to her temperament. And when she does things so well, that men will cease saying they are pretty well done for a woman, let her have every cent that her work legitimately brings. If woman undertakes to paint, to draw, to model, to write verses, let her not enter the market of complaisance with inferior articles and expect to draw pay on the strength of her sex. But when she equals man in whatever trades are appropriate to her genius, — behind all counters, in all counting-rooms, at the desk of the

calculator or the writer, in the school-room and professor's chair, — let her draw, cent for cent with man, the wages that reconcile them both with God. See these spruce men monopolizing industries that her nice tact and delicate taste could fill, at least, as well. Stand aside ; go into fields that are enriched by muscular and virile vigor ; vacate those places : the honor and self-respect of woman wait to fill them. Society has fallen sick with the struggles and agonies of the unemployed. Marriage itself is polluted by the exigency. Poverty must make a match, or make an assignation, or make some bargain scandalous to the man who drives it. More shillings conceded to the making of a shirt would double the religion of mankind.

Political science also undertakes the task of reconciliation when it recurs to the natural law of mankind, as the foundation for its organizing skill, to secure every man's title to life, liberty, and happiness. It is a favorite saying of some critics of our country, that they would vastly prefer to be ruled by one man than by a million ; and that a man preserves his self-respect better when he lets himself be used by one great intellect, than when he is tyrannized over by a vulgar, passionate and unreflective popular opinion. This is the sentiment that prolongs the vulgar vices of the people. Wherever this creed of an oligarchy flourishes, the common people do not rise out of their degradation ; they will be "mean whites," "poor trash," servile in peace, truculent in war. Put any weapon in their hand but intelligence, and they will parody the pride of their owners, and scrawl it in

blood. Their limited ideas are the reverse of the coin which is stamped with the limited sympathy of their rulers. Read one side, and you need not turn it to know what is written on the other. Mean, cramped, superstitious, lazy, stolid minds exist side by side with fine, fastidious, secluded, selfish intellects. Like master, like man; in one the narrowness borrows the traits of culture, in the other it is stamped by the barbarism which this culture maintains for its sole neighborhood. There's a whole wood-full of spindling and awkward sticks to one big and shapely tree: they protect it from the weather by their extent of abortiveness. But a handsome wood for shade and timber is the one where all the trees range pretty evenly, and are banded together in mutual and permanent conspiracy against the storm.

But the doctrine that all men are equal may easily be misunderstood to mean that no men are superior, or that if they are it must be in consequence of some fraud upon the whole. The equal right to enjoy an opportunity is not derived from, or authorized by, an identity of mental and ethical proficiency, any more than the chance to be healthy results from a perfect sanitary condition of all. When such an error infects the minds of men who crave some share in the opportunities of their fellows, it postpones their own cause by mixing with it crude and passionate schemes of social promotion, unscientific theories upon the relation between capital and labor, and jealous dread of the successes of talent. The markets of the world are not controlled by equality, but by difference; and in the whole range of differences a sense of justice is

found in union with the mental superiority that is essential to provide for men their opportunities. They will inevitably enjoy more than their own attainment can represent, provided they do not make their lack of attainment a claim to something besides justice: to encroachment, for instance, upon just superiority. Wherever a theory of technical equality prevails, the poor and miserable men become the victims of minds which have neither nobility nor superiority; mere knacks they are, that avail themselves of the theory that spawns them.

If all men's proficiencies were absolutely equal, all opportunities would disappear. All men would be impartially cursed by the monotony of being fac-similes of each other. Motion and life cannot begin till the mass settles into differing parts; then Nature selects her moment and makes her first gesture. Thus the nebula resolved itself into planets of varying bulk and movement, to bestow a choiring coherence on the sky. So men would be to-day a herd of mammoths if their structure had not involved the first benefit of inequality. When that pledges itself to generalize all opportunities, the benefit is prolonged and refined; the more brutal distinctions begin to disappear, and no passion but that of emulation is fomented.

Natural inequalities, which occur through varieties of cerebral structure and chances for culture, appeal to the Republic for a reconciling principle that shall preserve a sense of divine love and justice, and mediate between fatality of birth and the native title to all opportunities. The country is the atoning incarnation that steps in between God and man, lifts all

maimed lives into consideration, and assumes their liabilities. Its principle is this: the small and mean men are valuable, and that is their relation to God.

Every man has by birth some function, place, and service, and must have some opportunity. All the persons are the country: the land is nothing except for the persons to stand on while they are country; the institutions are nothing but personal conveniences; rails and telegraphs, states, governments, trades and industries are only expressions of the personal consciousness. When you say, "all the persons, without distinction of sex or color, are the country," you endow it with all the intelligence, and surrender to it the only advantage it can ever have over all the ignorance. You liberate all the latent superiority, and give it control over all the barbarous and all the refined inferiority. Either one or the other is a real evil until all the persons are let loose to put it down. Three hundred thousand highly intelligent and well-dressed egotists will plunge a country into the vast embarrassments of blood and debt: thirty million ordinary people will drag her out again. There is enough manhood and honesty permeating the mass to neutralize its own follies. Cut down the mass by millions, in order to cull the number that seem to you capable of exercising the function of governing, and the follies grow rampant that would be checked and counterbalanced by all the sense of all the persons. There must be great masses of people for yielding the preponderance of moral feeling that you require in every critical moment. Who are the best persons? The best feeling is the best. You cannot select your per-

sons ; but take them all, and nature will save you the trouble of selection. Not a drop of perfume will you get out of a thousand, or ten thousand rose-leaves. Boil them down by acres, and the subtle diffusion is distilled.

The Swiss city of Basle is connected with the opposite shore by a bridge that is famous as the scene of mediæval encounters ; they were animated by the excessive mutual hatred of the people who lived at either end of it. On the Basle side there stands a tower upon which a huge face, with a tongue lolling out, still reminds us of the standing contempt of the inhabitants for their opposite neighbors. Color and dialect, manners and customs, are the bridges whose either end is pertinaciously fought for. They have kept us apart when they might just as well be used for bonds of union, since all feet travel in the same way, although the faces look as if they were loath to follow. These physical peculiarities of an original diversity, or of varieties which have sprung up in the struggles of races for existence, mask a deeper uniformity of the blood, which represents the universality of the moral sense. Mental differences, also, there are, which seem to have put forth these physical signs in correspondence ; and manners partake of the discrimination. But the moral sense is permanently the same ; and, as it binds all men together, it reconciles all men to God. You cannot point to a vital difference between the conscience of the East and West. Cunning and falseness can be found everywhere, but also a prevailing sense of right and wrong. Men are constantly breaking the golden rule, but the rule is an

original property of every race, and its infractions are judged by its own cogency, in the same style, everywhere. Men vary in their habits of taking advantage of each other, but they agree that advantages should not be taken. Nations may be distinguished for the prevalence of some vice or two, but they are all alike in a general sense of what is vicious; and the best spirits in all countries disclaim the evils and recommend the virtues of human nature.

How mischievous it will be if people continue to allow their antipathies to influence their politics, especially when the whole world sends to us its representative complexions, as we stand midway between the West of Europe and the East of Asia, like powerful youth, towards whose shoulders the father and the mother stretch forth a hand. This gathering of manifold forces to stock a new cradle of mankind is determined by the instinct of humanity to be born again, that it may at length enjoy its inalienable rights; and every stranger contributes mental difference, but spiritual identity. Which is the larger and more disinterested function of his nature, which the more regenerative, which yields the diviner element towards a reconstruction of society? The conscience which accompanies this irresistible exodus towards a promised land. Will conscience swamp the country? No: but smartness will, and the brutality of mature exclusiveness. We ought to welcome all these illiterate and unfashionable children, who cannot help bringing the raw material of moral sense to repair our waste of it at every pore.

The art of living is the art of bringing into use all

the moral sense there is. And this requires a coöperation of all sexes and conditions, to set free unexpected advantages. For the opportunity which Religion seeks is simply a soul; when she has found one, its emancipation from ignorance and mean neighborhoods begins. The soul need not be gifted; can you add a perfume to the violet of conscience? Religion stoops to find the humility that makes her magnificent. All that she asks is, that some modest soul shall be suffering for the touch of her hand, which decomposes poverty and liberates it into great expansion of force and brightness. Take clear water, enough to balance a single grain of weight, and notice how insipid and colorless it is, and not to be suspected of any pretension to be an agent. But Professor Faraday lays upon it the hand of decomposition, and forth leaps an electrical force which he estimated at eight hundred thousand discharges of his large Leyden battery. And he declared that the chemical action of a single grain of water on four grains of zinc would yield electricity equal in quantity to a powerful thunder-storm. God's will, that melts or shatters, is imprisoned in small bulks. How it thunders and lightens when a moral Yea leaps from a million nobodies into the reconciling equilibrium of God!

The economies that are still hidden in the refuse-heaps of civilization are destined to reënforce Religion. Use and beauty are waiting to be raked out of the rubbish to serve her turn. The London scavengers remove the ash-heaps from all the houses of the metropolis. In them are waste pieces of coal, and the "breeze," or coal-dust, and half-burnt ashes. After

selling the larger pieces of coal to the poor, the refuse "breeze" is enough to bake all the bricks that are used in rebuilding the city. What object is there without a law of its own, waiting to be put to its appropriate use? In building the city of God, Religion is not deceived by appearances. Give her just a soul, and she is not too proud to utilize what God was proud enough to make.

If it were not dangerous to use old phraseology, which the sects have worn to rags and infected with their whims, there is reason why we should say, "God was in Christ reconciling man unto himself," because he was one of God's natural opportunities, and all of them are called to the work of redemption. Every good thing liberates; it may be without comeliness, despised and rejected, and its visage marred, but Religion can derive from it comfort and perpetuity.

We have this ministry of reconciliation. It is not confided to a class, but is held in trust by all right thinking and living. It enlists the whole of our intelligence, uses all the tools of science and civilization, and when it restores virtue to our bodies is certain that it will redeem our souls.

VIII.

FALSE AND TRUE PRAYING.

THERE can be no argument drawn from Scripture, if the purpose be to find whether praying has any intrinsic authority in human nature; for Scripture represents prayer as directed towards the most heterogeneous objects, and has a bias towards supposing all of them secured. Books and traditions may record the ancient methods, but they neither impair nor explain the instinct which tends to personal expressiveness towards divine powers. If we undertook to account for all the texts that put implicit confidence in praying, we should be involved in a dreary exegesis, when we might make it all superfluous by showing, and putting a strong accent upon, the pith of the question. The pith always lies in the law: it attracts, like amber, all light and groundless customs, which cling to something that is essentially different from themselves. It is a pity that man values them because he sees that they are attracted; they are the accidents of neighborhood, the fluff and feathers which eddy about in the air of every age, shaken out of crude intelligence, and drawn into the whirl of real forces. They must be picked off and swept away. But they

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are so strongly attracted, that perhaps what is their pertinacity may appear to be rudeness in the hand that ventures to detach them.

The prince, in the fairy tale, went hunting, and the holla of the chase brought him out upon a mountain-spur, whence he saw the growth of a hundred years that hid and imprisoned the castle where Beauty slept. His instinct shouldered a path through the matted undergrowth, till he penetrated into the court-yard where all forms of life stood arrested in the acts of a century ago. Through cobwebbed vestibules, sprawling scullions, frozen men-at-arms, slim serving-maids in mid coquetry, and roysterers petrified in the moment of their spurious inspiration, his quivering heart guided him to the one breathing centre that gathered all this motley life around it; the only pulse that was not menial. Time-honored postures and venerable sleep hardly raised his curiosity. Perhaps they suffered from his disdain. But some things may be pardoned to a man who cannot wait to be properly announced by an obsolete chamberlain, on the threshold of the kiss that rallies Beauty to his arms. All the hangers-on rouse also, but go about their business. She only is the law of all the scene.

Dr. Hooker, in his *Himalayan Journals*, describes the praying-mill, used by the inhabitants of Thibet, as a leathern cylinder placed upright in a frame; a projecting piece of iron strikes a little bell at each one of the revolutions, which are caused by an elbowed axle and a string. The written prayers are placed within

the cylinder, and whoever pulls the string repeats his prayers as often as the bell rings. There is also a kind that is made to be turned by water; on the cylinder the words, "Om Mani Padmi Om," — Hail to Him of the Lotus and Jewel — are painted, and a spindle, which terminates in a wheel, keeps these revolving. When we consider how laborious is most of the public praying in all countries, this is the greatest labor-saving machine ever invented. And Baron Schilling must be regarded as one of the principal benefactors of the human race, for he presented the Mongol Llamaites in China with two hundred and fifty million impressions of this prayer.* He had it set up so as to go five thousand times upon a large sheet, and sent them fifty thousand copies of that sheet. One may calculate that if a machine can be made to revolve five hundred times in a minute with one of these sheets inside, the effect is the same as if two and a half millions of tongues pronounced the prayer; quite the same. There is, indeed, in a private museum at St. Petersburg, a little ball, which is attested by a long document in the Thibetan language to have been produced out of nothing by prayer that was kept up for forty days. These balls, so originated, of course are rare; but the Llamaites believe that, once procured, they can propagate of themselves. However that may be, the little precatory cylinder is a great convenience, for the natives keep them spinning in their laps while they sit and converse together. According to the doctrine of the Mussulman it is the salvation of the world, for they

* J. G. Kohl's *Russia*, p. 91. Am. Ed.

believe that if a moment should occur during which the name of Allah was nowhere offered up, it would be a chance for chaos. The Greeks and Russians have a method that must be more trying to the individual: it is that of saying *Gospodi pomilui* twelve times in a breath,—literally, then, without inspiration.

We smile at these attempts of the finite mind to catch the infinite in a mill and extort the daily grist. Perhaps we subscribe to missionary funds for opening the slant eyes of Mongols and Tartars to the unsubstantial nature of machine-praying. But when the worthy clergyman, in the course of his routine on Sunday morning, said, "O Lord, thou knowest not half the wickedness there is in this place," and another, no less worthy, and a model of learning and grace, ground out a petition that the Lord would make "all the intemperate temperate, and all the industrious dustrious," we perceive that the string finds some adit through the Himalayan range, and dangles here. Baron Schilling's stereotyped contrivance cannot yield a greater number of phrases; and Daniel Webster's drum-beat of England, which follows the morning sun around the world, is paralleled in continuous sonority and emptiness one morning, at least, of every week. For the public prayers of the civilized are watered with phraseology which comes dripping from the well of memory, and which, by this time, we should think might be learned above by rote, if the invisible has ears that tolerate. Do we not know the style of every meeting-house, and the different contrivances to so conclude a prayer as to splice it with the shore-end of the invisible? A friend of mine, who was much puz-

zled to account for the genesis of a stocking, surmised, at length, that the women must imagine the first round, and then knit on to that. Is it improper to suggest that more than one imaginary round of ascription fails to start any thing that can weave the comfort of heaven for the soul?

But our false praying is not limited to these tricks of pulpit iteration, repeated from books, or dropped into the mosaic of extemporaneous discourse; nor to those parade-prayers which open festivals and town-meetings, and sometimes from the court-house bench supplicate that the judge's decisions may be overruled for good. But the whole modern theory of prayer is vitiated by various suppositions, that heaven needs to be informed upon our domestic and public matters, that a natural law may be modified or suspended at human entreaty, that certain gifts may be had for the asking and not for the practising, that our whole vital economy can let on the invisible as by the turning of a faucet. The most mischievous of these suppositions is the one that the laws of nature are not irreversible, but lie open to irruptions of ardent longing, so that the divine mind may be influenced to reconsider itself at the importunity of its creatures. The notion of Pastor Müller, who founded the Rauhe Haus at Hamburg, was that, whenever the funds for this undertaking fell short, he could always induce heaven to impress some person, unknown to him, to send the requisite amount. If we had no alternative we might accept his conviction as the genuine interpretation of the fact that money never failed him in the direst emergencies. But as his project became known, its piety was a

spontaneous and unspoken prayer to all like-minded souls, and their instinct did not need the urgency of heaven. It was already heavenly, and flowed towards heaven's charity by that law of fraternal intercourse which heaven seems to have framed especially to save its time, and prevent incessant errand-going. Noble people are God's labor-saving devices: they are responses to prayers before they are offered. They know what we have need of before we ask them.

There are establishments in Germany for curing disease by prayer, just as in Greece there used to be temples of *Æsculapius* where the priests professed to cure diseases by dreaming. The temples were built in the midst of beautiful scenery, in spots where every advantage of pure air and running water existed; and the patient, removed from all annoyances, confined to strict habits of diet and exercise, attributed his cure to the regimen which might be hinted in his dreams. The dreaming was a regular business, imposed with religious observance, and it is not wonderful that the patient had, during sleep, suggestions made from his physical condition through a brain that expected and put faith in them. Nature was not jealous when the waking man referred her sanative influences to some alterant that he dreamed would do him good. His instinct was indeed a part of her process; and many a lucky dream enriched the medical science of antiquity.

The Protestant Pastor Blumhardt is at the head of an establishment at Boll Bad, in the Black Forest, where he undertakes to cure disease by prayer. It is a cheerful place, where patients who have no organic

diseases, but are only in delicate health, get pure air and good food, lead a natural life in the midst of quiet and simple habits, with plenty of exercise, some Rhine wine, and the Pastor's praying. He attributes their improvement only to the praying, but admits that it has no effect in surgical cases. The thread of his address to heaven cannot tie an artery, nor will its stringency brace up the sagging aneurism. But the patients enjoy, with all the advantages of nature, the rare good fortune that the Pastor's praying consumes the time that he might otherwise devote to doctoring, so that his supplications are the only drug.

So Dorothea Trudel founded a praying establishment for invalids in the village of Männedorf, on the left bank of Lake Zurich, because St. James said the prayer of faith should save the sick. She was greatly persecuted by the doctors, who clung to their faith in those amulets called prescriptions, and preferred to send the patient himself into the invisible rather than pretend that it might intervene. But her establishment has acquired great fame, for the reason that her patients, drawn largely from the class of persons afflicted with mental disorders, find every soothing and restoring influence of nature and good sense. The secret of both systems is in the decisive chances secured to Nature to knit up the sleeve of care, which a restless or dissipated life had unravelled. If music could be substituted for the praying, a true function of heaven would assist in every case: for David's harp-strings vibrated with intercession, and wove a law of God around the tumult of the kingly heart.

There is a multitude of disorders in which the

nerves seem shredded into fine torments, or the relation and balance of the different brain-cells is dislocated, ideas that should naturally cohere are torn apart, till moodiness and mania are fed by every ascending drop of blood. Nature's hospital has been already founded for these by the divine sanity which anticipates the prayers extorted by our sufferings. Her retreats are full of simple remedies: as when the first step towards the restoration of an insane person has been made by interesting him in an employment that seizes the attention and leads to fresh coördination of his thoughts, — when, for instance, one who is violent and impracticable sees people fishing and takes a fancy to the task. He engages in it, becomes amused by the action, begins to mingle harmlessly with his fellows, because God's law of continuity restores the native associations of the mind.

Whenever it is observed that the outpourings of tender minds, which have been attracted to the side of sorrow and debility, can soothe and uplift the soul, and divide, as lusty swimmers do, the tumult, the error is apt to be made that this is because God is exorable. But it is man who is exorable, and the prayers play like the voices of instruments upon his suffering. The comrade hastens to his side when he sees him fall, puts the canteen to the white lips, moves the struck form beneath the shade of trees, and conjures up the expectation that the wound is not too deep; but, if it be too deep, all the regimental chaplains cannot make it shallow. The divided artery ebbs as their prayers flow; heaven cannot use them for tourniquet: perhaps it counts every drop of the heroic

blood with pity equal to that of the sad groups who lean upon their arms, to watch it slip away. But its intervention has already been conceded through their pity, and heaven says, "The means you have upon the spot, the help you can rally, is the aid which I bestow : if I had more you should not see him die."

It is very strange that in speculating upon the efficacy of prayer, we should not perceive how every event that is unavoidable is the test. Does any reason exist why an event should be avoidable? The reason must be either in the laws that are involved, or in some special exception. The exception may be spontaneously bestowed, or in answer to human entreaty. But if the reason why an event should be avoidable be comprised within the law of the case, heaven need not make an exception. If it be not in the law, and if the impending event requires that a special interposition shall make up for the deficiency, then comes the test question, Why does it not? Does heaven pick its cases, or is the prayer not agonizing enough to take God's will by violence? What kind of a theory of efficacy is that which the facts force to prove that prayer may be quite as ineffective as effective? The terrible refutation ascends from every floating raft where sailors lift a desire as deep as the ocean beneath them to some pity farther than the sky. Heaven's answer is, that whoso lives to eat his last comrade may be wafted to land if a breeze springs up. The real pity that is aboard another vessel heaves in sight too late. Prayer should have filled the sails as taut as marble, and held the tiller by the desperate sailors afar off, and thrilled the needle with direction. Is

heaven, then, fastidious? What quality in praying is it that compels its intervention? Saints and sinners, well-balanced and distorted natures, fibre coarse and fine, recklessness and fidelity, the whole of human nature learns from the impartiality of every year that God is not a respecter of persons; for the laws which bring rescue are incompetent to decide upon character.

Sometimes you fling your heart so close to the breast of heaven, that every angel there may count your pulse, and interpret its tumults into drums that beat to summon dear deliverance, to bid light rally to some glazing eye, strength to the side of some slow attenuation, if God will respond to the spotlessness of a whole household, and spare its bliss. Is it spared, and not by law? Is it not spared, and in spite of entreaty? It is strange that men do not accept on this question the test of the inevitable.

In the countries where rain abounds, official rain-beggars find their occupation gone. But in rainless districts they still make a merit of the occasional shower. This is not more inconsistent than our induction that an event may be ascribed to prayer which is accounted for by law. During the great Irish famine, the adjurations to the Holy Mother, and the invocation of all the saints, — nay, what was far more moving to infinite pity, the distress of millions of Irishmen, — did not restore a single potato to soundness. And the mothers who watched, out of eyes seared by famine, their children also decaying, discovered after prayer that the trouble was in the failure of a crop, and the whole broad, fertile heaven would not extemporize

another. As much of God's pity as could get on board a few vessels laden with the wheat of Chicago, the apples, corn, potatoes of New England, strove a feeble intervention. God was not prevailed on to show us the famine: we saw it, and saw how prayer whitened on its lip; the gaunt whimpers borrowed the sea, as if their tears had made it, that they might go voyaging for pity westward, since the sky above was foodless. We could not reach all mouths, but the test-event feeds every mind with the religious truth, that all the providence there is nature and mankind create. Not a sparrow falls without His care. Yes, but it falls. Was the agony in Gethsemane official or natural? The cross was natural, and stood rooted against prayer. Or was all this only a dramatic tableau, in which the prayer filled the *role* of incompetency merely to round out the piece? Providence builds its own test-theory upon its own impartiality.

The body-servant of Stonewall Jackson, issuing sometimes from his master's tent, would confide to others his opinion that there would be something to pay soon,—an unmentionable locality would be to pay,—“Massa Jackson had such a drefful fit o' pray-in'.” Misguided earnestness can concentrate its plans and temper by the act of prayer. Jackson fought the battle of the next day upon his knees, because it is an involuntary gesture made by every strong mind that heaps itself up towards the future enterprise. Something was to pay at Cedar Mountain: was it because Jackson prayed, or because Banks blundered? or will you create an escape from this dilemma by maintaining that Banks blundered because Jackson prayed?

The prayers of an earnest man like Stonewall Jackson are only signals to the neighborhood that his plans are good, his temper high, his whole soul eager to test its combination, and that nothing can be expected of heaven unless to-morrow's devotion brings it. To-morrow is already mortgaged to the devotion; the prayer is nothing but the deed that is signed and sealed. At the very moment when the stern Cromwells of history break into prayer, it is a hint that praying has become superfluous. The purpose is at white-heat, and heaven can add nothing to it; for to-morrow's opportunity is already on the ground and came there by the usual conveyances. It is worth all such praying to see that the good or evil occasion has come. Both sides will pray, but the toughest temper wins. Each side will try to stimulate itself by acts of devotion; but heaven makes a tour of inspection, and discovers whose powder is the driest. Perhaps wet powder will be suddenly kiln-dried by desperate circumstances in mid-tide of battle. Providence endowed desperation with this talent long before it took to devoutness, and has left at Marathon and elsewhere the texts of its primeval purpose. All parties are quite convinced that there is a Lord of Hosts, and make no scruples to approach him with what they have in hand or heart; but he is an unbribable director of quality by the smooth curve of David's sling, and lays bulk prostrate.

Critical moments give men opportunity to notice that heaven has made provision that goodness shall always exceed evil by a certain per cent. It needs only to be hard pressed to discover this latent quality

that secures the final superiority to heaven, and makes the world possible, without exacting a single phrase from man. Both good and evil indulge copiously in phrases which claim the God of battles, before an encounter, and reward him with *Te Deums* after. But God sings his own anthem in the event, however protracted through various fortunes of the fighters, all of whom serve him to a turn; and whether they supplicate or imprecate, it must be all one to a power who *depends* upon putting goodness into straits, and dotes upon it that he may see it harassed into the superiority that throws at last the doubles of victory.

What a fine disdain there must be in heaven for all the prayers that undertake to coax laws and qualities into events! Jefferson Davis had recourse to appointing days of humiliation, because men who prayed as well as they fought, and women who wept tears as salt as any that channelled the New England bloom, could not win the final per cent; for that had been previously settled on the Rights of Man, before a shot was heard, or a single aspiration struggled through the powder-cloud of war. And the North appointed Fasts, that all the clergymen might entreat heaven to reflect if Bull-Runs and Ball's Bluffs were not mistakes, and to hurry up advantages in consideration of the phrase that we were miserable sinners. So we were, and had been through thirty years of compromising, all of which had been clerically bespoken, and came to pass to the inward satisfaction of believers in supplication. So we were, guilty as the South, to such an extent that we must perceive how reconstruction blossoms from the feculence of both parties, and

independently of the prayers of either. Both the North and South had been educated to believe that events depended practically to some extent upon entreaties. So were the Catholics and Huguenots of France. We should say that the patriotism of the Huguenot lifted to heaven prayers after its own heart, and that they deserved to earn eventual supremacy for religious liberty. We can even venture to speculate that if the precious blood of St. Bartholomew had won the cast, Robespierre and Danton would not have been tormented with the thirst for more. But one would say now that heaven only had the object to scatter the fine quality of the Huguenot through every land. He became a slaveholder in South Carolina, and prayed with as much faith and smouldering earnestness as ever. But he lost his case, — in France where he deserved it, in America where he did not. Freedom has an architect who never mistakes human breath for blocks of marble. Say what we will, Catholicism must have had a quality as well as a majority: otherwise David's stone would have gone again crashing through Goliath's forehead. Is heaven sometimes flattered by High Mass, and sometimes by extemporaneous entreaty? Mankind is drawn upon the track of a long-headed purpose, transacts business of joy and sorrow at every station, and its energizing into phrases can neither check the train nor put fuel underneath its motive power. Conscience is on board; intelligence is the meal furnished at all the stopping places, where wells are dug and wood is hewn to exhale into genuine momentum for this journey out of fatalism into freedom.

If we can rid our religious feeling of this old claim that the drift of history, the accidents of life, the fortunes of the individual cannot depend upon laws of nature unless they are supplemented by our devotions, we can stand in a clear place, with so much rubbish that interrupted the view piled on either hand. As soon as we are thus disencumbered, we move freely to and fro with this question: How is it then that we cannot help praying? Of all our instincts is this the only one that turns into a vagabond, without a legal permit to beg, left to forage on the unsuspecting neighbors? What account is to be given of the universal tendency of man to pile up all his preferences or his antipathies till they stand level with a threshold over which words may carry them into the divine consideration? Is this done because otherwise we cannot arrive there, and cannot get commended to a power that serves us? Though God knows what we have need of before we ask him, must we still ask, because his knowledge will not move towards us on any other terms? We have freed our deck of the litter of notions that partiality for special providences scattered over it: as we float off the bar can we swing round into confidence that moral and spiritual gifts depend upon the asking? Or if they do not, whither are we sailing with this instinct after God, that is the compass on the wide waste, this ardor that streams from every mast and spar, these moments that fill with sudden breezes, we know not whence, and put underneath us the rapture of motion, and draw every shred of us taut into a silence which declares that we career!

And what is to be said to the discovery that every

kind of misguided moral sense shares the same raptures, and strains towards the same harbor, — the possession of God; that a passion of entreaty has ennobled all lost causes which have drawn the blood and tears of men; that every zone exhales in fervid preferences which Buddha, Allah, Jehovah, Jove or Lord are supposed to respect and gratify? Perhaps this discovery of a universal instinct is just what we need to make before we can interpret it.

H. W. Beecher, in a Lecture-Room Talk upon prayer, asks, "Ought we not to pray for direct spiritual gifts?" — and answers thus: "Yes, I think we ought; but I think that whenever a man asks God for any spiritual gift, the next step should be to ask, 'Have I not asked God for something that I can get myself? Have I not asked God for something that he has made provision to give me in an indirect way?'"

This may be good vestry-room logic, to hold a confiding audience together, but it vanishes in a well-ventilated space. If there be something that a man can get for himself, his first step should be not to ask any thing in heaven or earth to give it to him. His next step should be to procure it. "As the plough follows words, so God rewards prayers." This proverb of William Blake reminds us of Hesiod's direction to the farmer to pray to Jove and Ceres, but with his hand upon the plough-tail.

Is there no point, then, pursues Mr. Beecher, where God, finding that something is inaccessible to a man by the natural laws of his constitution, will intervene, and give it to him in a special manner? Yes: he thinks there is. He can understand how Peter, for

want of a pass-key, should require an angel to let him out of prison : and how, when Paul and Silas were praying in prison, with no files and saws by which to effect an escape, a lively earthquake should be detailed to shake open the doors and set them free. So Mr. Beecher pulls the string of the Llamaite cylinder to summon a conventional deity. If something be inaccessible to a man by the laws of his natural constitution, what is it but a divine decree that it should continue to be so? But if a man's nature breaks into prayer, that is the instinctive response of all its gifts toward the infinite giving.

Let us drop illustration into the depth of this subject, that perhaps some draught of it may be lifted to the lip. Through flat and unprofitable moments, a poet is waiting for the next consent of his imagination. The bed of every gift, that lately sparkled or thundered as the freshet of the hills sent its surprises down, lies empty, waiting for the master passion to open the sluice when it hears the steps of coming waves. The poet's nature strains against the dumb gates of his body and his mood. With power and longing he heaves them open, and is brimfull again with the rhythm that collects from the whole face of Nature : the hill-side, the ravine, the drifting cloud, the vapors just arrived from ocean, the drops that flowers nod with to flavor the stream, the human smiles that colonize both banks of it, — all passions, all delights hurry to possess his thought, crowd into the precincts of his person, pain him with the tumult in which they offer him obedience, remind him of his last joy in their companionship, and will not let him go till he ennobles

them by bursting into expression. Relief flows down with every perfect word: the congested soul bleeds into the lyric and the canto; the poet's burden becomes light-hearted; and the supreme moment of his travail, when it breaks in showers of his emotion, cools and comforts him. He must die or express himself. All the blood in the earth's arteries is running through his heart; all the stars in the sky are set in his brain's dome: this life and light must be discharged into a word, and the poet restored to health and peace again. Goethe used to say that when his imagination accumulated thus, as it was fed by near suggestions of his own life, or from the head-waters of thought, he was nothing but disquiet, till it slipped away through every line he wrote, and gave him an answer of serenity. He might mistake it for a touch of the infinite satisfaction. It was the olive-branch brought home to him from the subsiding turbulence of his emotion that covered the tops of every gift, and had to cut a channel to release him.

This mental gesture has in it the essential quality of praying. The poet asks for nothing, but receives the gratification of a nature already framed to be sated and soothed when its gifts toil up into a clear place. Cortez and his men, possessed and heated by a wild surmise, hewed their way through the dense chapporal, till a whole Pacific lay in the orbit of their eyes. Enterprising manhood carries along its own answer into every entreaty of its powers to be developed and to reach their highest pitch. And when a man voices the mood of tenderness, of confidence, of expectation and of gladness that has risen within him, and breaks

into God's open air with caressing epithets, his mood reaches its answer in its own climax, and he is satisfied that God has given him just what he has earned.

It cannot be different with the moods that culminate into regret and confession of a maimed, unfaithful life. They rush into consciousness, and see themselves; the act of launching an entreaty floats them into the salutary bitterness of being broad awake, thoroughly live and aware. A man has been so organized that all his moods, in which his average character finds their poetic expression, shall discharge themselves into a calmness that benefits him, because it was reached through the personal disquiet which breaks up his illusions. The sight of himself is a preordained opportunity for amendment. These answers to prayer lie latent in the constitution, where God patiently awaits their germinating, confident that he need interfere no more than he does when the lyric soars, the tragedy weeps and terrifies, the symphony mourns towards its own deliverance, the picture flings its beauties on the wall. His inspiration is previous and constant: not subsequently recruited to the pitch of an entreaty. Why should it be, if we are so framed that a feeling cannot be profound that does not announce itself? A man may think he is the master of a speculation, or that some province of knowledge is familiar to him. But every thing lies in the condition of a nebula, till its own stress lends motion to it, when he can organize in the symmetry of expression what he thinks he owns. Not till that moment does he own it. Not till then does it reward him with its organic satis-

faction. So, difficult problems over which our gifts brood and starve with waiting are no progeny of ours till they chip the shell and run warm into our content. When Kepler's soul wrestled with planet after planet in the midnight, and threw them on the floor of that silence where they lifted visor and confessed to him the law of their distances from each other, his tumult of possession, his hour of acceding to the throne of that idea, broke into the exclamation, "I think thy thoughts after thee, O God!" Devoutness is the announcement that every success makes of its superiority to prayer. It has thought heaven's thoughts, and felt its emotions, before it can grow bold and hot enough to importune. "God allows us the epithet only after the fact."

The same organic felicity rises higher than smiles, and unlocks from either eye the torrent that cuts the smiles up and denudes their surfaces. We cast ourselves by the side of the children of our hope, or the comrades of our friendship, and weep each access of our sense of bereavement away into the quiet that follows exhausted emotion. Sweetness mingles with the equipoise which the nature purchases at this dear rate. If our despair has besieged heaven with a claim to be understood and comforted, its climax subsides into its answer, till time brings the perfect consolation of a scarcity of tears. We have thrown ourselves upon the bosom of expression; long repressed feelings have sobbed themselves to sleep with their arms around a recollection, and a dream that reality is still possessed plays upon the quiet face. Reality is as distant from us as the antipodes: but a tide reaches

our eyelid, propelled from that distance, and lifts it open and drips there till thickening smiles absorb it. God's answer is already in the love that refuses to be comforted till it has been cloyed with its own emphasis.

Human expression varies, but the law remains the same. Heaven is no more attracted into compassion by the symbol of scarifying the flesh and maiming the limbs, by the howls and rages of the Syrian or Celtic temper, than by the suppressed composure of the Quaker, whose face may be as impassive as a grave, but whose dead lies buried in it. The formulas of agony feed upon the flora of every meridian, and draw their color from the leaf; so that the Esquimaux derives from his sensations an answer different from the Polynesian in the terms of its comfort: but the real response is in the expressiveness which exhausts the individual grief, and is as heavenly in the howl of a Fijian as in the *miserere* of the Sistine Chapel, or the Christian's claim that the Comforter shall speedily arrive. It arrives, and has never yet shown an imperfect knowledge of geography, and is in a ratio to the population as direct as the deaths are. I know some cases where it does not seem to arrive: but it is not for want of prayer. Rachel is a constitutional temper that refuses to be comforted.

It must be that a divine mind foresaw to make human nature adequate, on the whole, to every emergency, so that the surprises of sorrow should only liberate from their own bitterness a tonic to rectify the disorder which they introduce: as Mithridates had so inoculated his system with little doses of poison, that

whatever kind was secretly administered became its own antidote as soon as swallowed.

In South America, there is a tribe of Araucan Indians, who maintain, says Mr. Helps, that prayer is needless, because their gods are so beneficent that they are sure to confer upon men all things that it is good for them to have. Nevertheless the Araucans show their gratitude for this goodness by humble offerings. This tribe, which was never subdued and brought under the control of the white man, yields to the true philosophy that justifies the universal instinct. Prayer is the gratitude of every gift, and also its cogency. Gifts excite feelings of hope, veneration, dependence, gratitude, and the whole instinct rises Godward. If we keep out the notion of affecting God, how beautiful and natural is the whole movement of a man to establish a sincere friendship with the Mind who framed his gifts. When it is entirely disinterested, without any reservation of expecting to alter one divine intention, because it knows beforehand that such intentions, of divine necessity, must always be the best whether we are on friendly terms with God or not, then how ennobling becomes this spontaneous proffer of our best things! This unaffected homage puts us on a friendly footing with the whole of Nature, and God's perfect purpose in all things includes us too: we offer incense as frankly as the fields, with no more afterthought, nor pretence of a claim beyond the gift of growing and producing. So that the Creator inhales at the same moment his flowers, and the gladness which they propagate when their pollen strays into human hearts. As the world is continually offering up its beauty and

its use, and God, seeing that it is good, takes satisfaction in His work, so mankind may exhale in the prayers of natural desire: these rise up, the unforced tribute of things that reach the felicity of fragrance. And the rose is content with its own: it has no hankering to smell like a lily, nor to make its own scent more penetrating; it vanishes heavenward through the delight which it generates in us, and God knows flowers by that means. We have a right to think that he takes satisfaction in this reflex action of the nature he has made. The "golden vials, full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints," are the delights of our own symmetry; they cannot bear to be enjoyed alone: they rush to some companion to declare this discovery of something that is majestic, comely, or tender; they say, "Share me — let a friend's bosom feel the heart leap; 'tis only half a rapture till it is all gone, all emptied into thy beauty and holiness, thou friend of my gladness and partner of my existence! See, I decant my heart into thy hand — how precious it lies there in the place that framed it; the nest has not grown cold." When I am best, I must drive home and let my ecstasy rush over the threshold into all the kindred arms, without a selfish thought — not even to claim shelter: least of all, to beg for food when I am full already, and that is the reason why I have arrived.

But when we say that God's sympathy with the jubilee or discontent of man's desires sets him to limit, to affect or modify his purposes, to correct what he is persuaded by the remarks we make to him must have been wrong, — in short, to supplement what is

already perfectly contrived, and to receive as advice the prayers which nothing but that perfection ever could have suggested, we turn the relation between the finite and infinite into dickering. The Guinea traders advance towards a group of natives, lay down their heap of trinkets and merchandize, and then retire: the natives advance, and put opposite to it a heap which they esteem equivalent. If the trader's estimate is the same, the exchange is made: otherwise the heaps are modified till the balance is reached. "How will you swap?" says man: "wilt thou be pleased to approach and examine my heap, glittering with gems or tears?" Heaven approaches to say: "Your heap was grown on my soil — I have nothing better to offer — will you bring spices to the tropics? I recognize them, and proffer the greeting of their own nature."

A father and mother love the tender homage of their children's feelings, but still ordain what is best, because they perceive what imperfectness there would be in yielding to ill-considered desires, however eager, and winged with filial impetuosity. There is satisfaction when the desires harmonize with the parental intent; but when they do not there is a serene regard that is not affected by this state of filial unresponsiveness. The well-considered desire is but the reflection of the well-premeditated purpose, whether it be for evident good or seeming evil. There is no praying possible to a man until he becomes again enough of a child not to calculate his raptures and not to crave an equivalent. As the child meets nobly the eyes of his father, in which many winters have garnered their

sorrows, many summers have expressed their fruit, so the simple-minded man can exchange glances with the God who is quartered on his dwelling, and return smile for smile.

How often we lift ourselves heavenward with *almost* a perfect and a pure desire, and almost find ourselves standing on that sky-line which our highest earth projects. But there is some indefinite sense of being not yet quite in earnest, that is to say, not yet well grown. We have not fearlessly cut all the cords and let the gifts all loose. We almost reach, but there is still somewhere an anchor in the depth that forbids us to swing into perfect freedom. We linger painfully with our real self not yet entirely buoyant within us. Are we ready to cut loose for ever, and trust ourselves up through that unexplored depth? How it tempts and draws us, but how a single anchor holds us moored! Just when we think that our desire is whole-souled enough to carry us away to hear heaven say, *Yes*, because we say it, a dull consciousness of flesh comes creeping up and clinging; we settle back into immaturity. Perfect prayers without a spot or blemish, though not one word be spoken, and no phrases known to mankind be tampered with, always pluck the heart out of the earth, and move it softly, like a censer, to and fro beneath the face of heaven.

But what is the use of this natural desiring? Set aside the conventional prayers, mere useless gesticulating and cerebral trickery, the bales of rhetoric which the churches dispatch to a country altogether foreign; put aside every mannerism that denies the

perfect order of the physical and moral world, the perfect prescience of that order, and that the best thing must at any rate always happen, with or without human desiring, — what is the use of letting all the gifts run into this conspiracy of feeling, to gather with sword-clashing and acclaim around a door where the invisible is listening? There is no use at all, on the old theory that we can transact business with God, chaffer with him, beat him down, work upon his feelings. We can get a salad without growing it, just for the asking, as soon as we can get sanctities. Mr. Beecher well says that “prayer is often an argument of laziness. A person finds that his temper is a source of great trouble to him, so he says: ‘Lord, my temper gives me a vast deal of inconvenience, and it would not be so great a task for you to correct it as for me. Will you please take it in hand through the influences of your Holy Spirit?’” He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh. “Do as I do; grow your own salads, in the sweat of your brow, and your own sanctities in the blood of your heart.” There is not a crevice along the line of this decree of labor, where a man may pry with his pickaxe of begging.

What is the use, then, of natural desiring? That is not the real question which the universal instinct suggests to us. This is the question: How can you *help* having the prayers of natural and spontaneous feeling? Not a word need pass. Suppose earnestness does not fall on its knees and break into speech: if there be real earnestness, *that* is the prayer, because it is the sincere human endeavor to fulfil a gift, a task, a purpose, an inspiration. It is a

religious tendency of the finite towards the infinite, since it is by human earnestness that the work of God goes on.

When a boy first sees the ocean at its orgy among the shore-rocks, he careers more lustily than the whole deep, more mobile than its waves, and shouts his irrepressible sympathy with freedom. The sea waited to be well fitted with that voice. It is ascription of praise even if the boy bandys school-yard vernacular with the solemn sky. When perfect music drives its golden scythe-chariot up the fine nerves, across the bridge of association, through the stern portcullis of care, and alights in the heart of a man, there is adoration, whether he faints with excess of recognition of one long absent, and lies prostrate in the arms of rhythm, feeling that he is not worthy it should come under his roof, or whether he mounts the seat and grasps the thrilling reins; God's unity is riding through his distraction, brought by that team of all the instruments which shake their manes across the pavement of his bosom, and strike out the sparks of longing. He cannot help knowing that his visitor anticipates a harmony to which he has not yet attained. No matter whether he calls it perfect Beauty or perfect God, whether it prostrates or enraptures him; his soul cannot avoid making some gesture; it is consent to heaven, and a declaration of love.

It is not different with any moment when our powers are heaped up towards some attraction. Shall the waters which follow the moon protest, "What is the use of this?" Their movement declares, "We cannot help it." The name of God, and a flash of recogni-

tion that passes between earth and heaven, sums up our sincerity, whether it reaches freedom in arts, service, suffering, or simple natural joy. In Mrs. Gaskell's novel of "Mary Barton," Job Legh says: "It's not often I pray regular, though I often speak a word to God, when I'm either very happy or very sorry. I've catched myself thanking him at odd hours, when I've found a rare insect, or had a fine day for an out: but I cannot help it, no more than I can talking to a friend." And Jean Paul Richter, waking from a hideous dream, in the sun and air of a genial morning, says: "My soul wept for joy that I could still pray to God; and the joy and the weeping and the faith on him were my prayer." He had nothing to ask for, but every thing to bestow. What is the use of it? What is the use of thirds or fifths in harmony? The vibrations do not undertake to have commercial intercourse; their mutual benefit is in the law of their affinity, and the air breathes the marriage that consoles a world.

The young prince gets into a castle which he does not know belongs to him already by the foreordination of love. Having but one search to make, and the search itself being the entreaty he has to frame, he passes through the mercenary groups; scullions may work for wages, and remain always scullions; the men-at-arms for booty; the chaplain coins his prayers into board and lodging, even Gold-Stick in Waiting is not inaccessible to bribes. Everybody recommends his knack, prays for it, craves consideration of the supreme Beauty. But the youth has mounted at length past all these landing-places, a suitor accepted

before he reaches the chamber of avowal, where he wakes the blandishment which is the counterpart of his enterprise.

So when the instinct of human life struggles obscurely upward to its various achievements, it takes divine nature along with it, comes into the light, sees its face, and says, "Is it thou, my God?"

IX.

STRIFE AND SYMMETRY.

MR. Darwin's theory that all the varieties of animal and vegetable life have been due to some principle of natural selection, working by means of a struggle to maintain life, has lately been reënforced by him with a theory that every line of inheritance is endowed with indestructible germs, some of which lie latent while others become expressed in character, but all of them are liable to come to the surface and announce themselves. A human family is a vehicle for these atoms, which assert themselves or retire into privacy as time goes on; so that each generation not only inherits directly from the one preceding it, but is likely to reproduce some long forgotten traits of ancestors, even to peculiarities of birth-mark, features and complexions.

This recurrence of family marks has been noticed from the earliest times. Plutarch mentions them in an essay of his *Morals*, and relates a contemporaneous case of the youngest son of a certain Pytho, of an ancient Spartan line, who was born with the mark of a spear upon his body, which was the family mark, but had not reappeared for several generations; it

came at length, as if to guarantee purity of descent. So, says Plutarch, early generations of a family may keep latent some qualities and affections, or hold them slurred, which afterwards break forth and display the natural tendency to some vice or virtue. This is Nature's entail. She brings a child into an old gallery of family portraits and startles it with its own identity upon the wall, of some one who is reputed to be dead and buried for a hundred years, but who acquires in this child a fresh lease of existence. This occurs because the family germs are carried along by all the members, and propagated for years in silence and oblivion to bide their time. Vices and virtues thus leap to the face and into action, by this law of their own, and the individual is already decided upon before his birth. In this shuffling and cutting of the cards, the trumps that turn up are not always honors. But no individual in the whole series possessed any choice in this vitalizing of the family germs. They wait for favoring conditions. "In the thickest pine-wood," says Thoreau, "you will commonly detect many little oaks, birches, and other hard woods, which are overshadowed and choked by the pines. When the pines are cleared off, the oaks, having got just the start they want and secured favorable conditions, immediately spring up to trees." Farmers used to wonder, when they burnt off a tract, to see a new growth without any planting take possession of the soil. But we now understand that the old growth merely discouraged the forms that were already on the spot and languishing for chances. So, every member of Mr. Darwin's family possesses all the

heir-looms: but no individual in the whole long series can ever account for his fancy to furnish his new house with them. The feudal brigands who called themselves barons while they were levying toll on their domains, appear afterward at the Old Bailey under the style and title of highway-robber, and are comfortably hung by proxy. Felony or piety may skip a generation or two because the ground is occupied by some other alternation of germs, but they are sure to reappear. All our senses are detectives; and a dead ancestor is liable to arrest in the person of his descendant.

The Chinese, in connection with their worship of ancestors, have the practice of conferring rank and dignity, not only upon the person who extorts it by some great service, but upon the whole line of his dead ancestors. The title does not pass to his descendants, for they must also earn distinction. It works backwardly against the stream, for each ancestor has been the parent of a man's excellence, by transmitting unconsciously the atoms of nobility; so the title puts into each port and deposits a part of its return cargo. The ancestor was like a bale of goods in which rare seeds of the tropics get transported to new soil. Or, he reminds us of the bird that flies with a crop-full of cherry-stones, and enriches with them a pasture where boulders were the previous sowing.

This theory of indestructible seeds lurking in everybody's physical frame, which serves Mr. Darwin to favor his idea of natural transmissibility of traits, threatens to do us a mischief in the moral direction. We are obliged to accept it, or some modification of

it, if we would account for the facts of inheritance. They are too plain to be missed. Lunacy lies dormant and pacified through groups of charming children, to creep at last from its burrow and climb to the eyes of one: then, a look that has been dead for years "revisits the glimpses of the moon." A mother cannot bear to knit, but she has a child who knits precisely in the style of its grandmother. Lady Frances Howard had a mother who taught her to be "unspeakably venal and impure." The gifts of her person were as rare as the deficiencies of her soul. She married Robert Carr, an empty-headed favorite of King James; but there was her previous husband to get rid of; also a friend of his to murder. Divorce and poison legitimated their secret profligacy with a marriage. A blue-eyed girl was born to them while they lay in the Tower, under the charge of murder. Escaping justice, they buried themselves in the obscurity of the country, to rear, amid mutual reproaches and a godless life, the daughter, who became one of England's purest women, and the mother of Lord William Russell, who died for resistance to royal privilege. Does God

— "set such pure amens to hideous deeds?
 Why not? He overblows an ugly grave
 With violets which blossom in the spring."

Such daughters are really born long before their father and mother come into the world.

It is not necessary for an old family to preserve the law of primogeniture, or the habit of exclusive connections. There is another law that keeps record of

virtues and vices though the page be scored with intermarriages. The manuscript is a palimpsest: whatever writing went to it is underneath, and Nature's sense finds means of being read.

But what effect does this begin to have upon our feeling of moral accountability? In one direction it has a good effect, to show us that Nature insists upon better methods of dealing with criminals and all the exceptional victims of excesses. It would have a bad effect if it encouraged average men and women to put up too easily with their imperfections. If medical jurisprudence should ever become scientific enough to prevent a jury from procuring a man to be hung, who had been expressly born to repeat the propensity and the act of murder, it would not justify a jurymen in watering his sperm-oil or making a false invoice as soon as the trial is over. If a single glass of liquor can inflame the arson in a man who began burning as soon as he knew enough to light a match, it ought to stimulate a court to provide treatment more medicinal and restorative than a perpetual prison; but the judge would be none the less accountable if he took a bribe or perverted judgment to soothe some popular opinion.

It is very clear that there are exceptional cases in whom the sense of moral accountability is as low as the capacity for resistance to temptation. One is the measure of the other. The divine mind claims through them that they shall be exempted from our contempt, and treated with restoration instead of punishment. Just as a case like Laura Bridgman's is a hint to Dr. Howe that, if the blind, the deaf and dumb, would

eventually possess ideas and be put in communication with mankind, a patience that cannot tire, and an invention that baffles the closest lock of the senses, and picks them open, must be exercised. There is a moral disability as deep as this that appeals to courts for the justice of remedy instead of penalty. And it is for science to instruct the bench, by putting into every case of moral malformation testimony as to its responsibility: for men who are not born to be hung are actually hung for having been born. Nothing but the strictest science can save us here from the two sins of sentimentalism and cruelty.

But it is plain, in the mean time, that the exceptions are candidates for asylums and not for cells: shut up, already, in an organization that crowds in upon their life, like the old dungeons whose moveable walls lessened the prisoner's air daily, to crush the body flat at last. Do you think these moral prisoners are unconscious that they first saw the light in prison, first knew their own brain as their gaoler, and pressed their soul against the senses, like a piteous face that clings to a grated window? God has not left these without a taste for the liberty that streams into them from every well-born face; they have glimpses of that domain of smiles, good women, and stray breaths from the boundless firmament of manhood. They know best the woe of their inheritance: nothing but drink ever does or can blunt their feeling of inferiority, and lend flushes of mad triumph to their overt acts. To believe otherwise would be to suspect God of indifference to his maimed and helpless children: their discouragement is his pity pleading at the bar of all our

courts to have his own decree overruled, and his poor prisoners remanded into love.

Does it follow, then, that clerks who have a salary of \$1500 should manage to spend four times that sum, upon pleasures that *breed* moral disability within them, that the trustee shall exculpate himself for speculating in the stocks of widows and orphans, that the gold gambler shall strip them to adorn his little game, that the shopkeeper shall lie about his goods, that a man who has congested his brain by habitual drinking, till his judgment is impaired and his impulses brutalized, can take a shot at any man whom he imagines to have wronged him, and be acquitted on the score of his congestion, that every insolence shall pasture upon the indiscretions and confidences of mankind? The first move of your detected sharper would be to allege irresistible circumstances, like those which commend a starving mother to our pity, and bid us extenuate her theft. Her hunger gnawed herself and children double, till they looked over a grave's edge. Perhaps it was dug by generations of poverty. His hunger was its own ancestor. The Chinaman would execrate him directly, and not look critically back into his line.

There are, then, exceptions created by birth, and exceptions which spring from overpowering circumstances. All of them are appeals to us to discover the sanitary method appropriate to every case: so that a man who is congenitally mischievous need not be punished because the court does not pronounce him to be a malicious idiot, and consign him to a poor-house. God has already made more delicate distinctions.

Exceptional cases must be put aside, however, when we treat of the moral dignity of the average man. How clear it is that they spontaneously refer themselves to a class outside of the average accountability of mankind. We should shake bitter fruit from Mr. Darwin's family-tree if it bore excuse and subterfuge. And what are his constant germs, after all, but a device of the Creator to propagate a moral strife and elect it to be the parent of symmetry? If moral evil recurred with every father and mother, the people would become brothers of the gorilla without the trouble of descending from him. And if moral innocence had been stereotyped in every heart, there would have been by this time a nursery containing about 900,000,000 babes. Science cannot prove all germs too constant for our purpose, which is to maintain that personal freedom and accountability have a definite per cent of advantage over inheritance, so as to modify the character of the majority.

Long before Mr. Darwin wrote, mankind tortured itself with questions of the relation of its acts to the power and foreknowledge of God. Its instinct that some traits were invariable made it reason thus: "If God foreknows all that I shall do, it must be because I have a tendency to do those things, and no others: it is intended or predestined that I shall do them; it was seen in the very beginning how finite beings would conduct themselves. The world and the soul were both made in such a way that the things which have been done must have been done, and all the things which I shall do I must do, otherwise they would not be done; how, then, can I appear to myself to be free

to do as I please, to follow evil or to abstain from it, as I please : if I do not abstain from evil, is it because my evil was predestined, and if it was, how can I feel that I am morally accountable?"

When this question, with help from Scripture, comes up to embarrass us, there is sometimes a disposition to avoid it by supposing that many different things might have happened in the world from those that did happen, that men might have been more virtuous and have made greater progress. The object is to shift the responsibility from the perfection of God to the imperfect volition of man. But we perceive that this shifting will not change the nature of the question : for we must still refer to some cause the fact that man has been so created that he acts imperfectly, no matter whether from choice or necessity ; his acts must have motives and causes, and they must be in his organization, and that must be traced back to the organizer. I have always thought that the various ways of discussing this interesting question have only been so many ways for avoiding the point of it, either to clear God from blame or man ; that is, to make man supreme at the expense of God's freedom and accountability, or God supreme at the expense of man's. Whereas, if the answer to the question does not leave God supremely foreknowing and foreplanning, and man sufficiently free and accountable, the question has not been answered at all : because we know that we are called upon to perform certain acts, and we know that the divine mind must have foreseen whether we shall or can perform them or not.

Without stopping to rake into the terrible dust-heap

of metaphysics which has accumulated around this burrow where human speculation has been working, let us try to find some plain and rational account of our relation to God's foreplanning. Then, in the first place, does it ever occur to us why we raise these questions? Why do we desire to consider ourselves free and accountable beings, and why do we shrink from the idea that every good and evil act has been precalculated and predetermined? A man has a great advantage here, who does not believe in the originally depraved condition of the human soul, but who believes, not only that man is designed to acquire goodness, but that his original tendency is good, that the worst child of the worst parents, born and nurtured under the most infamous circumstances, is not totally depraved. If we believed that the evil in our nature counterbalanced the good, we could not find any reason for desiring to be free and accountable beings. We should no more be troubled with any ideas upon that point, than a cotton-gin is troubled to account for the fact that it is not an electro-magnetic battery. If we tended by nature in the main towards evil, we should be machines, and the question of our moral freedom would be indeed settled beforehand, predetermined against us, arranged from the beginning against virtue and in the interest of vice. There would be no reluctance to believe that good and evil are both the mechanical products of divine foreknowledge. But we do shrink from that belief, and we prefer freedom: we welcome responsibility for our errors; there is rejoicing in the dignity of remorse and shame; we greet the accusations that convince us that our conscience is

emancipating us when it tells us that we are bound. What a proof of our moral freedom it is! We have a voice that is capable of telling us that we are the slaves of a bad habit. If this slavery were predestined it would be unavoidable. What, then, would be the value of the voice? It would be only insult added to the injury of our depravity: an ever-rankling rebuke of something too mechanical to deserve rebuke.

How is the voice of conscience possible if it had not been predetermined that we should act conscientiously and purely? See, the very words we use, having the flavor of righteousness in them, are unaccountable if we are not free to choose between the evil and the good. Look at all the words which we use in speaking of moral action, and the feelings that belong to them. They grow out of the kindly soil of a nature that is destined for goodness; like all other words, representing truths and facts, they are invented by the soul out of its own substance, and pass into circulation without raising the least suspicion of their genuineness. I would like to ask how a man who believes in any orthodox scheme of depravity would account, on simple terms of natural development, for the mere existence of the beautiful moral words that express the holiness of hearts, and of the other words by which we mark our sense of its opposite. Where do the phrases "a hateful crime," "an ugly disposition," "a mean and grovelling nature," come from? If we grovelled by nature, we should not defame our nature by inventing these disagreeable epithets. Would an implement that is made to inflict pain and to spread destruction all around vilify itself, find fault with its original in-

tention? Its acts are its words, and they simply express a calculated mechanism. But our words of opprobrium find fault with ourselves and with our neighbors; they arrest our course, they bring us up to the bar of opinion and of judgment. They are suggested by a universal sense of what is beautiful and of good report, and are the police of a soul that desires to live in order and never to draw down upon itself their bitter ministrations.

If it were not for the light of the sun, we should not have the contrast and opposite of midnight. It is in the very act of flooding the universe with sunshine that the central orb marks its position by a multitude of shadows. They are fleeting, but the light continues; dense, obstinate, uncomfortable as they are, the mighty parent of gladness and morning betrays its existence and marks its motion by their dusky fringes. They mark it but they cannot stay. Their quarters are continually beaten up by the advance of daylight, and their existence is a continual decamping. So the words of our moral aversion mark the supremacy of an inner light.

But, on the other hand, the words of our moral approval must describe our real nature, as it was predetermined, for in this respect they are like all the words representing the qualities that prevail in the natural world. For instance, take the qualities of motion, as they are illustrated by the stone that leaves the boy's sling, or the planet that was hurled with a similar force from the centre of divine origination. What is the prevailing quality of motion? Not crookedness, not stiffness, not a snarled irregularity. These are

phrases which spring from our observation that the great movements of the world are straight, or circular, or spiral, or meandering, or descriptive of all the beautiful sections of a cone: These are gracious and acceptable words, pleasing to the inner sense of harmony and proportion which we inherit from the Mind that made the world. Whenever we observe a movement in some limited space that is wanting in the beautiful and easy sweep of all the great movements which keep worlds turning, leaves springing from a stalk, and gems from a centre, we apply language to it that marks our sense of its discrepancy. When we say it is crooked, we brand it with our feeling that crookedness does not prevail throughout the works of God. The notion would not be possible if our mind were not preoccupied by the idea that symmetry prevails. The exceptions are the shadows that bound the light, and are constantly decamping at its approach. A feeling of this, which is kindred to a feeling of moral proportion, still exists among people whose intelligence is sunk in barbarism. In the lines of their canoes and the curves of their paddles they have to conform to the motions of winds and waves; and they weave up with the gestures of their dances the refined swayings of the stars that perform their measures through the sky.

What a wonderful instrument to be invented by the savages, that stand the lowest in the scale of human intelligence, is the boomerang of the Australian. It is based upon an instinctive sense of the beautiful and accurate motions which all bodies must make when they pass through a resisting medium. As it darts afar, then glides upward like a bird, and turning back-

ward seeks the hand that threw it; or, dipping and rising, stretches out by a long curve to pass the corner of a wood or the brow of a hill to strike its object, it imitates the ellipses of the sky. The air resists the freedom of the weapon, which, in overcoming, in asserting itself, in carrying out its natural efficiency, finds that what limits its freedom endows it with grace. The savage teaches us that Nature is everywhere on such good terms with Nature, that the apparent quarrel is only a healthy wrestling between two friends. The man says to the angel: "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." The sweep of the boomerang brings back to us from the original design, that is just out of sight, our positive and pleasant words.

Then our moral freedom must consist in our personal vindication of the original design against all the exceptions and the apparent contradictions. Our finite life is thrown directly into the midst of these, on purpose that our souls, by resisting them, may learn to share the original freedom. It is put into us, with all its seeds, to be developed into vital conformity with a primitive intention. If we lived, upon the great scale, an infinite life, that should comprehend all the real motions and forces of the universe, we should not be troubled with the exceptions, they would not be so styled by us, and the word *contradiction* would be as impossible to us as it is to God. But we live, upon the little scale, a finite life: the moral freedom that is destined for a wider life learns its first lesson close to the earth and thrust into a body; on every hand comes resistance to develop its free and beautiful movements; the insignificant bit of road that we

travel with so much fighting and privation seems a stunted and a distorted bit, until we discover that it is part of the long sweep of the freedom that makes our souls a divine endowment.

It is resistance that decides the beginning of every graceful line. If it were not for that, we should neither know that we had freedom or were capable of developing it. Put before every human being his choice, perplexed as he is and often desperate among the obstacles to his moral welfare, between responsibility for all his actions and irresponsibility, and he will be eager to claim, before God, the privilege of being held accountable for all his depravity. Before man, he will extenuate and excuse, to win opinion, or escape from it. But, notwithstanding his repeated failures, and the sense of shame they kindle in him, he is in no hurry to get any consolation or immunity from any doctrine that destroys his moral freedom. We all cling to that: it came down with the rest of our birthright. And it is the common sense which prevents all the theological jugglery about free-will and foreknowledge from troubling our mind.

We are created with a preference for the perfection which we have not reached. That is God's foreknowledge in our case. He knows that we will fall into vices, but that we prefer goodness; and that will eventually, either here or elsewhere, vindicate his plan. He secured in advance the moral complexion of every one of us for the remainder of this year. As an astronomer will calculate to a second the arrival of the earth's shadow upon the moon's disc, he might calculate, if he cared for superfluous knowledge, the

moment when a temptation will touch the soul to overspread it. He might calculate, too, that with the moment of its departure there will recur the preference of the soul for light. The eclipse is not the law of the soul, but one of the circumstances of its career that makes the light more precious and adorable than ever. We should not feel the chill, nor be conscious of the dusk, if the law of our soul were not a hunger for light. We are free to hunger for it.

This hunger is the expression of the moral attainment possible to each individual, and cannot be the same in all, because the structure is not the same. But it announces the moral function that is possible to each. And all freedom must of course be relative to the amount of this latent possibility.

As exercise, however, develops this function, it enables it to crave more satisfaction, just as the muscular system, trained by labor and expanded to the limits of each one's capability of growing muscle, demands a greater variety and amount of food. If it receives this increase it is kept in its highest normal condition. And as in this way impaired states and defects of the muscular system can be overcome, so moral exercise can do a great deal to obviate inherited disinclination to perform much moral service, can resist tricks, and modify the characters of the structure. But freedom is individual, and cannot transcend the possibilities of the structure. It is none the less absolute, so far as each man is concerned, and not removed from his private control. He is free to hunger for it. There is our answer to those heaps of metaphysics, tons upon tons of dust, that have accu-

culated about this question. It is the answer of God through the voice of our human preference.

If any one is disposed to say that we might have been created spotless, and incapable of spot, I answer, then we should have been incapable of moral freedom. The very pith of freedom is, to choose if you fail, and to choose till you succeed in modifying the sources of failure. A perfectly regulated and infallible human temper, clock-work skilfully adjusted in the beginning, and warranted to run upon being wound up, is the nature of an automaton. Such a human being would be devoid of every emotion, ignorant of the bliss of working to save its personality from the conflict of circumstances. We prefer to find cause for laughter and for tears, to feel the heart leap when the soul sounds its trumpet of warning, to have our nerves swept like a harp by circumstances, even though the strings bend to cracking. When, after many trials, a manly character learns to draw sweet and firm vibrations from them, and every thing around us that has waited for the right note to be sounded wakes up responsive, and full-blooded harmony fills all the air, we begin to see and to glory in the divine purpose. For we are so framed that the repose and dead infallibility of a machine is hateful to us. If, by giving up a portion of our moral freedom, we could be spared a few tears of anguish, is there a man who would not cling to his freedom, and prize the tears of his own remorse as drops that heaven adopts with its iris, bid them run, and bid his freedom see its own vindication? We long to wake up more fully to the glory of finding ourselves in peril, compelled to fight for our

position, rallied, in the face of serious opposition, to support our preference for God, to taste the sweet joy of finding that we are equal to this warfare, and that God has not set us growing like a shapely tree, or bending heavily with unearned fragrance and fruit: he has snatched our roots from an inanimate soil, and here we are floating wide in the perils that force symmetry upon us.

In summer strolls upon the broad beaches where the ocean runs by your side, the symbol of your moral insecurity, you have picked up the symbol of your moral symmetry. It is nothing but a shell: "frail, but a work divine," because its delicate outline has been forced upon it by the restless motions of the element in which it lived. That external curve, that spiral of successive growths, has been built by the curves of the brine itself: it represents the rhythm of danger; the little tenant has unconsciously secreted its house all around it in lines that correspond to the lines that threaten its frailness; in hardening, they express the very motions of the forces that are incessantly tossing and worrying about it, and they assume the only shape that can shed these forces in safety. And the curve grows solid while the waves remain fluid; so that you pick up what reminds you of a beautiful character, whose lines are moulded in correspondence to its perils. The souls that are thrown into this ocean of moral freedom grow in the grace which at once describes and repels its uncertainties.

Your child puts his ear to the shell's smooth lips that are purple with the speech of victory, and listens, fancying that the sound of the sea still lingers in its handi-

work. But the sound is in his own ear, and might say to him that his heart is a deep not yet disturbed enough to fashion and complete his beauty. How long it will be, too, before he understands that he secretes the walls of his building from a material that is furnished by his apparent enemy !

What should we say would be the effect upon man's character if the natural elements, such as electricity, magnetism, vapor, had no difficulties for his management : if he could strangle them in his cradle ; if God made them over to us in traces and martingale, trained not to shy nor kick, their uses understood by instinct, their properties discovered without the expense of a single accident, not a hurt to life or limb, no hazard in applying them to the purposes of our material life ; if every flaw in a boiler were respected, every break in the lightning-rod jumped by the deferential fluid, every failure to make a weld in moulding shafts or cannon let pass without an accident, every compression of vapor kept within a destructive expansibility, — bad air at the bottom of a well, and gases that rush out behind the miner's pickaxe, harmless as daylight ; a box of nitro-glycerine, by just throwing at another person's head, turned into a poultice for his pimple ! Why should we not whine about the catastrophes that arise in dealing with the elements as well as about the perils of our moral freedom ? The God who created the elements to be our ministers. foreknew and predestined all the tricks they play upon our ignorance. He might have made us impenetrable to their blind furies, so that we could study them in safety, harness them to our team, as a boy ties a string to his

rocking-horse and exults in the imagination of his fiery gallop. Fortunately not: for instead of being boys with rocking-horses, we desire to be men clothed in the thunder we have tamed, and carrying weapons which our own tears quenched and tempered into steel. Dominion over Nature, discovery of her secrets, application of her powers, is not done by babes who smile in their fatuous sleep upon the mother's breast. They are safe from harm there, but they are also far removed from manhood, mere lumps of contingent humanity, alive as long as they are held. Men are not afraid to drive the team of physical catastrophes; they are freighted with knowledge and power. You cannot conceive of any other way to get control of elements except by personal experience of their liabilities; no other way, unless you are the God who made them. If they were a gift to us, and came by instinct, we should not be the men who could use them. Virtue itself that comes by instinct uses the man who inherits it, and is only the advertisement of a previous freedom. The law of freedom is, that peril and advantage walk hand in hand. What sister-angels on the threshold of earth! Defying each other in harmony, repelling each other's glances till they melt into a look of concurrence, so that man is no sooner alarmed than he is attracted, and he sees that it is God himself who has divided himself thus that his will may be done.

Experience seems to furnish us with the deduction that His will partly is to create and to fund great crowds of veteran souls, who have discovered what justice is in conflict with injustice; who have not

learned righteousness by rote, nor imbibed sincerity as a flower draws sap or a babe takes milk: souls who have not been content with an instinct for goodness, but have hazarded their life, and put their moral freedom on the venture to make it positively known and lived by them; souls covered with the scars that victory healed but was too proud to obliterate. We indulge an expectation that these souls, accountable for every vice, but predestined to prefer the nature of God, are recruited into other armies to maintain the purpose of freedom upon other fields. As my glance falls by night through the depths of a clear sky, where the stars attract like virtues not yet reached, a suggestion comes to me that God has other fields, and beyond the utmost verge of vision and imagination work still for moral freedom to perform, glories for accountable beings to gather, and new illustrations of foreplanning. If so, the sky is not too deep for souls who learn to swim, and the ocean of this earth's moral danger is large enough for our training.

Does it seem to us that, after all, there might have been a better way? Perhaps we hate evil so sincerely that we shrink from deliberately showing that God made it an element of moral freedom. Perhaps our lucky temperament never had to contest a single point, and cannot imagine this style of optimism. But I ask, Is it not so? — was it not foreknown that it would be so? How then could there have been a better way? We must believe that a perfect Mind takes the best way to bring its children towards its own perfection. When we begin to wonder if there might not have been better ways, do we not see that we begin to cast

imputations upon one of the best ideas we have, namely, that the divine intelligence is all-perfect and all-wise? Every circumstance connected with our physical and moral life must go to that idea for its interpretation; because there is no other idea in the soul, so centrally situated, so constantly prevailing, so distinctly to be made out as latent in its primeval substance. One can hardly have patience to hear the supposition that the power of God did not select the shortest and the swiftest road to its purpose; that evil is a mistake, a misfortune, an afterthought of fallen man; that death and sin came by the weakness of man instead of by the unshakable consistency of God; that God is now trying to repair an oversight, or to neutralize the unfortunate uses that man made of his freedom; that the earth has got away from God farther than he expected that it would, farther than is consistent with his absolute perfection. I see in all things absolute perfection; that I see at all is proof to me that I see in the best way, and that moral freedom is not clear from vice is proof to me that vice is essential to moral freedom. Else why is it here, whence came it, whither does it tend? If I cannot answer such questions so as to accept all the facts, I deny God as flatly as the man does who denies that God exists at all; because I set up some of the facts as being inconsistent with the nature of a God.

It ought to be the aim of our intelligence to see what facts there are in this universe, especially those which touch our character most nearly, to call them by their right names, and to hold all of them up to the divine honor. All of them. There is a plant

called *Hyosciamus falezlez*, that grows in the Sahara. It kills in a few hours the horse, the ass, the dog and man, but will fatten camels, goats and sheep. Nothing can be without its uses: from the poison lurking in the herb which a sheep can eat though it kills a man, to that element which, by threatening man's moral freedom, makes him so much better than a sheep, and such a monument of the infinite foresight.

And here we are maintaining the great problem. How can we account for a moral argument that could not have been held by the man who was contemporary with the mastodon, though he had wit enough to slay the creature? Such strife as his rude weapons inaugurated has scattered hospitals and churches all over the surfaces where primitive passions browsed and raged in the shape of animals. One after another huge blustering becomes extinct, or is huddled into obscure places, just as the old animality still lurks in each man's cerebellum. But when you count the centuries of culture, you mark the successive terraces whence strife receded and left the land to symmetry. It is like the effort of mankind to build a ship. The first dwellers upon coasts ventured out to fish a little in a vehicle like a feeding-trough, burned and hacked without taste out of the trunk of a tree. Men began in this way to learn what motions water makes, and what form best answered to the exigencies of the winds, currents and billows. It was a constant fight to match peril with a cutwater: and the old, half hollowed trunk, with both ends as blunt as the sense of the builders, passed through all the stages of contest, represented by the Japanese junk, the Phenician

galley, the Roman trireme, pirogue and catamaran of the South-Seas, balsa of the Peruvians, caique of the Turk, and kayak of the Esquimaux, till flocks of ships hide it within their graceful lines, and are shepherded by willing winds into all the seas of ample maintenance. In the deep hold of this symmetry which has been extorted from centuries of foul weather, the mild civilizations of mankind pass safely to and fro, and traffic in ideas, charities, and beauties. The first savage who struggled with nature is still inside the last soul made ; but he is so enveloped in buoyant and sea-worthy curves that he rides on the bulk of dangerous problems, weathers the lee shores, and swings to in the harbor of his moral freedom.

X.

A CONSCIENCE FOR TRUTH.

SOME of the Fakirs, or reputed saints of India, make a point of standing upon one foot for such a length of time that they succeed in being incapable of putting the other foot to the ground. Or they sit in some constrained posture until all natural gestures and motions become impossible. In other words, they share that notion of religion which makes it consist in some isolated actions, some separation from the general health and usefulness of human kind. The result of it is always some kind of shrivelling and maiming. A Dervish who occupies both his hands with holding up one foot while he goes hopping on the other, and repeats, "There is no God but God!" is a very fair specimen of the sentimentalism that takes God out of the powers he has created, and puts him into excessive gifts or tendencies that earn our phrases of commendation. Of what consequence is the venerable nature of the phrase? One of the safest things a man can say is, that there is no God but God; but he cannot be understood to allude to that Person who has created two feet for religion to stand upon, if, while he says it, he struggles to make one foot suffice.

And heaven must scorn the humility which we telegraph thither by genuflection ; it must prefer the manliness that stands by all created gifts, and looks itself in the face without pretence of worship. God is all the time premeditating the hands and feet, the senses of the body, the procreating and divining brain : in the pleasure of each function he “renews his ancient rapture.”

Suppose we say that God was in divine men reconciling the world to himself. It is very true, until we isolate the phrase from the rest of mankind, and break off the continuous incoming of some force into all our truth, our hopes, and our love. The infinite is in its great men by virtue of its eternal longing towards mankind, to become incarnate in them, and to acquire some emphasis for the moral law. And whatever we may think of separate men, it is certain that mankind is full of grace and truth. The great names that stand for the happy organizations along whose lips the divine breath played its sweet and solemn harmonies, stand also for the whole of organized humanity : all lips are ranged conveniently, and the visiting breath extorts their half and quarter notes. What harmony the whole obedience of a generation must procure ! The Being who extends beyond its limits is alone in a position to detect and enjoy its majestic fulness, as of the music which Pythagoras said the planets made by the ratio of their bulk and movements through the vibrating ether : the inhabitants of the planets are part of the movement, and cannot overhear it.

Yet, sometimes, when human affairs have accumulated into a moment of intense interest, there is a hush,

or mood of expectation, just before the crisis, during which men become conscious of the exalted condition of their powers: they hear the consent of many consciences, they feel that they are harmonizing with a lofty will. After the wind has been blowing off shore for some time there is a lull, just before a change of the wind from seaward. In that lull, the mustering waves lift up their innumerable voice. Careless strollers on the beach drop their spoil of sea-stray, and the breath of the consenting anthem freshens them with awe.

A few years ago the American people overheard the thunder of their own awakening, as the moral law, which had been beaten down so long by the hostility of slavery, had gathered in too many hearts to be repressed any longer. The States seemed clustered in the sweet and firm gradation of the pipes for a Pan to touch, with lips that gathered a great purpose, as a note went up from each to frame the accord which at the time we called our Patriotism, as we listened to the unexpected sound; but it was the climax of an inspiration, a possession of the conscience by its own law; a rapture of the consent of millions to their own likeness with divine indignation and justice. The moral law had been painfully struggling to touch this land for a generation: many bleeding hands had been lifted from the surf to grapple with points of advantage; their efforts were God's own pertinacity; lashed along by the stress of his presence, they were caught by the undertow and swept backward all the time, till suddenly, what seemed drowning became rescue and safety, and we climbed from the iron-bound coast to

the meadows where the amaranths grew for our heroes. Foreign observers who were lounging curiously up and down along the edge of our whitening purpose dropped their trifles, and hailed the "uprising of a great people" as they termed it; our whole history culminating to speak in the first rash gun that struck all consciences with the same force, and set them vibrating into unity.

But it makes a great difference whether we say that God invented the moral sense, put it into a world of good and evil, so organized as to be attracted by the one and repelled by the other instinctively, without any farther complicity of the divine mind, or whether we make that Mind in some way the participant of the sense thus invented, and therefore its perpetual guarantee. A moral sense is not merely a contrivance for detecting and holding on to goodness, like the machines which reject dirt and foreign objects and pass the proper staple through. But personal sympathy is the life of it. Approbation and disapprobation are the personal feelings that justify and inspire its sense of right and wrong. And as one human conscience seeks the alliance of another, thus doubling the strength which it shares by fraternity, can the infinite Conscience be content, after having made our moral sense of such a temper, to forego the delights of personal sympathy? And it cannot be only a delight, such as a great artist takes in observing the exquisite and infallible adaptation to some result of something he has made: must it not be coöperation also, personal complicity, the longing of an infinite Person to enjoy his own emphasis in the thing that he loved to make, to

continue its companion, to profit by its activity? The very pith of the business of inventing consciences was to secure a right of passage into all times and places where spirit conflicts with matter, and good with evil. Was there an intelligible purpose in ordaining such a conflict, and was there love as well as wisdom in the purpose? Into what remoteness, then, has that love vanished, into what a chilling and heartless withdrawal, if mankind, after becoming compromised to suffer for that purpose, is left discountenanced. Each generation, instead of being a column led to battle, and officered, cheered, organized clear through to victory, with its inspiring soul in every movement, would be a crowd of men abandoned by its general after he has betrayed it into an ambush, where its instincts may fight through or perish.

Of all our gifts, the conscience is the most sensible to the divine immanence : it has such faith to welcome, such faith to detest, such an instinct to set things right, such sensitiveness to unhealthy influences, such joy in plain-dealing, such pain when duplicity is near. What witness is there, so perpetual, to the closeness of God? It is heaven's challenging outpost, furnished with the only countersign. Does it impair our belief in this to remember that we have often been without any consciousness that something universal would fain conspire with us, and that we have passed through flat and dreary periods when a single kindling moment would have been to us like the sight of a palm-tree to a caravan. There is no gift of our intelligence that is always full of blood ; no channel to the soul that is always spilling over. The divine force retreats from

the yellow fields of autumn, and does not keep up a perpetual harvesting: but the soil in which the faded stubble is left disconsolately standing is filled with the elements that make it liable to be visited. Constraint loosens its hold of every seed in the returning sun. This appears to be the method of divine activity in our structure; not an inflammation of all the faculties at once, nor a continual extolling of any one of them. They are the world's opportunities.

When you escape to the sea-side from the drowsy August heats, the flat brown rocks tempt you down to caress the lip of the retiring tide; it seems to offer itself while it is really withdrawing. And the recesses underneath the cliffs are left bare; the tawny bunches of weed no longer sway and sparkle, they hang dry and dispirited. All the sea-creatures have lost their vivacity, and retreat out of sight into the darkest and dampest places, underneath low ledges where you can only surmise that they exist. They no longer taste the brine. But it soon creeps landward again, not having forgotten its favorite inlets, nor the forms of life that take toll of it to get through the day with. Inch by inch, as if hardly effectual to slide up so far and wet its old mark again, it gains upon you, freshens pool after pool full of humble suitors, till at length your heart feels every tentacle that is out of sight lifting to breathe: you know that the anemone repaints its orange, and the hermit-crab scuttles forth to surprise another meal. So the nourishment of spiritual gifts is constantly renewed: they cannot hide so as not to be visited, they cannot languish so long as to become impaired.

But we must not be deceived by all the notable instances of the uprisings of a popular conscience, and conclude that God reserves his high tides for these. Our consciences are not merely his opportunities for heaping up great critical moments of history, and concentrating moral virtue against disease and threatened dissolution. Historical purposes rose in a great wave that took Athens on its crest and dashed it against the Persian barbarism, to keep that from violating a hearth at which civilization and the arts might warm themselves. When the wave subsided, every conscience was like the pools left between rocks, where life goes on. And the subsequent development of morality, which preserved all the common practical truths of the conscience, till they rose to a high tide in Socrates, was just as liable to be visited and freshened by the diurnal presence, and just as dependent upon it, as the great moments, when hearts by running together and surprising each other's excellence take fire with enthusiasm. When this country lifted against slavery, there were no more consciences in it than before, but they suddenly conspired; if the ordinary life was improved, it was from the contagion of this successful feeling: it freshened all the gifts, and all the men and women held a nobler and a purer tone with each other. Charity became more self-forgetful, forlorn hopes were recruited to victories; so regenerating is fraternity. But the supreme Thought has not retreated from that page of our history to meditate in some seclusion another that shall shine as fair. Our sense of yea and nay lies all open to it unprotected; the humblest soul who strives to be honest in his dealings, and wakes in

the morning to nothing more brilliant than care, nothing more hazardous than some temptation, quite out of the way, never to be mentioned, hardly obtrusive enough to secure an epitaph at last, belongs to the history of his time because his conscience belongs to God.

This keeps a country capable of inspiration, liable to swell into great moments that are mentioned by the voice of trumpets: this level of the divine presence that is like the circulation of the blood. We are told that when an orator has mounted into his best periods with all his audience, his brain is filled with blood and fits tight against the arches of the head. When it shrinks again, it is with the loss of not a single drop, and the heart's regular function maintains his opportunities. Let it seem a venerable and sacred thought to us, that our structure preserves, as God pleases, from day to day, our ordinary pity, love, and indignation, our sympathy with truths and causes, our disposition to defend the right, and stand by the oppressed, our friendships and our genuine affinities. This is our real citizenship of the republic, this preponderance of health in the general conscience. What is it but a desire to anticipate the depravities that make heroic remedies necessary, — the loss of blood and tears, the wear and tear of gentle sensibilities, the distrust that puts on file the terrible expense and criticises Providence. It is the greatest effort of divine in-being that keeps the general sentiment effective, and our ordinary days void of offence. We cannot strike a more fatal blow against religion than to favor a theory that great moments, shining gifts, peculiar men, exclusive truths,

uncommon feelings, announce that the Person has drawn near, and selects some flesh for incarnation. All the great elements of man, like air, light, magnetism, are the most constant and the most diffused. Neighborhoods live upon the general pity, toleration, sense of responsibility to laws. What do we gain by placing so much emphasis on isolated things? We remove them from the benefit of the common sunshine. There are fish that have accommodated themselves to living in the Mammoth Cave, and in the sublime recesses of the Styrian Alps. But they have paid for their exclusiveness by the loss of sight. The same species that live in waters visited by the unobtrusive bounty of the daylight preserve the faculty of vision. And if we ever think that it sharpens our eye to hold it against an aperture where the light seems concentrated, we shall discover too late that it has been dulled for the great horizon of the sky. The focus is so bright that the optic nerve is paralyzed. The very form of the eye corresponds to the concave that is filled from brim to brim with the even day.

A display of power may seem to be great because it is all in one direction. The lightning cuts a narrow channel of white heat, and with its whole resistless force disappears through a small hole seldom bigger than a pea. The diffused sunshine holds, as in solution, light and heat, and spills all over the rim of the planet. It is hardly noticed because its great elements are subdued into harmony with the eye, and but little transcend its optic qualities. But that great harmony feeds the broadness of a universe.

I supposed that the moral sense was not merely a

contrivance for detecting and holding on to goodness, but that the divine sympathy must repair to it. But I suggest whether that does not follow some law, in order not to oppress and displace our moral freedom. Does God find it necessary to be minutely curious about our private thoughts and actions? May it not appear to Him that the health and development of the conscience are best consulted by a regard for the reserve in which all finite thought must have its birth? The conscience can do its own watching, and chronicle its own condition. It is heaven's moral representative on earth, and is furnished with the eternal prescriptions. Every time that a heavenly purpose breathes across these laws of our nature, they are reinvigorated. Something responds to our best moments; and there is refreshment, confidence, joy in the response. No asking can bring it; nothing but the excellence itself. All the sincere and burning hours of the spirit seem to drop and be lost from this effulgence. Thus He descends to us, thus He rests upon our highest points; there the cloud breaks with voice and lightning, and the drops collect in the old channels, and hurry down towards the commonest details and the earthliest places of our life. But having thus drifted upon our mountain top, and parted with this influence, He leaves the flooded conscience to trickle into the street, the work-shop, the kitchen, the wood-shed and factory, to deposit the precious washings of an inaccessible sphere. Thus, long after heaven has passed on above us our life is all saturated with its gifts.

Do we consider seriously enough what it is that

we carry about with us in this self-registering power of conscience? Indeed, every faculty of the mind is a cell where gradual increase is lived up, either from sweet or poisonous flowers that are found as we range over the whole expanse of life. Heaven loves the human sweetness that is stored away for emergencies, but is it curious about the little flights and circles which we make in gathering it? So conscience, or the instinct for the true, the healthy, and the heavenly, guides our wanderings, calls every faculty off from base pursuits, tries to reject what hurts us, and recommends what will make us, soul and body, a sweet savor. And it records the results, without the intervention of higher powers; it is infallible, it can make no mistakes, whether we are awake to this or not. You have seen the tell-tales, which are furnished to various machines for travelling, creating motive-power, or elaborating products: all the operations may proceed unconsciously from stage to stage, yet, however complicated, at the end of the journey the register yields infallible returns. Our own souls are the final exhibit which we make to heaven. God sees us, and sees the whole career, and comprehends at once its most insignificant details, — thoughts the most fleeting, motives the most private, desires that were abandoned or pursued, — when we bring Him our quality, the total result of living. All the drudgery is in it, but sifted, as the miner sifts the silt of mountain streams: God knows where the gold came from as it lies heavy in his hand. Sometimes the whole soul swings loose from house-keeping, shopkeeping, pleading, bargaining, ditching and draining, and goes

straight off towards the invisible, as though the earth should leave its orbit from love of the sun. Perhaps not one of our petty gestures has attracted heaven's attention, but it bends to the coming of a whole soul, and kisses its kindred.

Consider what a dreadful power this is of self-accumulation. It lays up within us vileness as well as grace. In moments of temptation we say, No eye sees me. In the secrecy of our thinking we imagine that the body is a screen. But although God must be indifferent to omniscience, in a minute and trivial sense, we are the betrayers; we are recorders of every pulse and breath. Can a single drop of blood evade the heart? Can a single vibration help transmitting itself to the atmosphere? Lift your hand with reverence to your head, and say, Whatever transpires beneath this roof is beyond annihilation, can never be recalled; whatever flies through these windows flies not back again. Shut out the moth and rust, and fling wide open only to clear mornings and a perfect heaven.

This intuitive capacity of ordinary men, and its liability to be visited, is threatened with contempt in a country where men estimate each other so largely by their power to succeed in various undertakings. The shrewdness might detect itself turning a cold shoulder to the innocence. The savage is not dispossessed and driven to the wall of the Rocky Mountains: he walks in Broadway, daubs on the war-paint of caucuses and delivers their whoop, and follows every trail that leads from Wall Street into plunder. He is a man of business, and, if you do not excite him, he may be gathered to his fathers guiltless of eating the hearts of his vic-

tims. But if the jaundice of the gold-room infect his blood, and cast a sickly glare of yellowness over the landscape, he will no longer distinguish the natural hue of honor.

A German has written a fantastic story about a whimsical old gentleman, who, in contempt for the cutaneous virtue of fashionable life, palmed off in society a highly-civilized chimpanzee as his son-in-law. Every thing went well enough, in spite of some minor reminiscences of the jungle, till a little temptation, too suggestive of the home of his youth and the fresh feelings of his unsophisticated years, tore off the skilfully-adjusted mask, and nothing of the man was left except the properties that had been supplied by the tailor. A whole street-full of gamblers have thus been noticed suddenly to strip off twenty thousand years and become naked vindications of Mr. Darwin's origin of Man.

When the spangles on a garment compensate for the mire through which it was dragged ; when success justifies its own cheating ; when the blood wrung out of somebody drips from a vulgar escutcheon, and is never wiped away so long as the crest is high, its dragon or its vulture rampant, and the whole emblazonment fills the street, — the conscience slinks home by the alleys, and frets because it has lost its right of way. Its desert was to succeed, as well as the shiftiness that demoralizes everybody by its enormous gains. But this smart social system will pass into anarchy without an obscure sense of ours that integrity is the founder and preserver of States. We are needed. There is not a rill, wandering through quiet places, that does not eventually temper the bitter, stormy sea with its

sweet waters. And, when a number of people will draw all the feeding-streams of their privacy from plain conscience, it gathers like the rolling of a great clear current down towards the ocean, into whose turbid brine it shoots with impetuosity, so that sea-faring men shall detect with surprise the sweetness of the hills, dividing and refusing to mingle with the tide. A man's soul may make a very faint mark, the volume which its activity propels may appear to be a ridiculous trickle, but, if it be clear and cool, the earth thirsts for it, the heavy sea is waiting to be well tempered by it, — all nature sighs for freshness, and lifts up its face to the hills whence comes its help.

These blotches of half-barbarous society must be touched and arrested by our plain yea and nay. The aid we give is not measured by the insignificance of our mind, but by its singleness. What constructs the broad highway of solid light that paves ocean toward the rising or the setting sun? The felicity of every single drop of the water in which a whole sun lies mirrored: minute, but illuminated, they lead towards the morning, or suggest its return. What a laurel of glory is the thought that a very little person is so implicated in the success of his country's real truth, to hold it in a pure form, to keep it undisturbed by the passions that welter all around it, to fix one firm spot of fidelity and to stick by it; as if to say, "Though the whole earth go adrift, though double-dealing prosper and scorn me, though the darkness of barbarism invade all my neighborhood, covering cities and people as waters cover the sea's bottom, — here I stand, to hold my little trembling jewel and permit its slight ray to escape me! 'So shines

a good deed in a naughty world.' Come, friend and neighbor, and hold your jewel next to mine till the faint beam flashes; perhaps a word will go forth, *Let there be light!* and these little spots of our fidelity shall melt together into the irrepressible radiance of a morning."

When we feel the successive shocks which the embezzlers, defaulters, gamblers, over-reachers, give to the general confidence, they are hints to our neutrality that nothing will restore faith, blunt the forger's pen, break the tables where the dice of speculation play with our prosperity,—nothing, but a fresh issue of the conscience that is minted in a million innocencies. That is the true return to specie payment, and the arrest of evils which, we pretend, are tolerated by necessity.

As a great action, performed by a few men under grievous disadvantages, takes root somewhere upon the soil of the planet, and after many generations vindicates the original trial, and illustrates the forlorn faith by appearing in forms of generous politics, in disfranchised conscience, in ameliorated conditions of the oppressed, so shall our little candle throw its beams as far as that. It is a great action to keep faith high and aggressive in a period when the people wink to each other applausively at hearing of an admirable intrigue, and relish the stories whose point is some successful artifice. It is a great struggle, — founders of States never equalled it, explorers of new worlds never went so far, — to be simple when duplicity and coarseness meet with toleration; to preserve a few wants, a few plain habits, a few rational and manly objects of enterprise, when cities go mad with show and guilty

satisfactions. If a few drops of the poison find their way into a man's high vein, it is a great thing to resist, to purge the blood, to thrust back the whole terrible tendency, to wake, flinging the period off as a nightmare. This is the function of a Conscience for Truth.

But Truth is not inclosed by the fragrant rose-hedges of innocence. They are planted, rather, as retreats for health upon its broad domain. Conscience is sensitive to the truths which decide a person's career, direct him towards charities and causes, foster his taste for being in a minority, reduce the articles of his theology till a pioneer's pack will lift them easily for a day's march, at the end of which he divides with his comrades rations of his love to man. Some critics profess that Dante has put the young man whom Jesus loved, but who turned away sorrowfully, into his third canto, where he describes seeing the shade of him who from cowardice made the great refusal.* However that may be, it was a moment when conscience refused itself: the whole ardor of the Truth hung about the youth's neck, rushed to his possible attainment, loved its own generous implication of identity in him, longed to own his unsullied heart and turn more youth into the pure stream. Was ever a man so flattered? There is no man who is *not* so flattered.

This quality of being loved and chosen never dies out of the most common or mercenary life. It is there, if the soul is there: it is liable to be summoned, it can

* "E vidi l'ombra di colui
Che fece per viltate il gran rifiuto."

INFERNO, III. 59, 60.

be empanelled for the great trials of Truth. If the soul is not there, — in other words, if we suppose that habits can entirely eat away the columns of conscience and hope, and bring down the personality which they sustain into an irretrievable ruin, — then there may be nothing left to love ; but that is because there is nothing left to live. It is a sponging out of the thinking and emotional characters. Truth never offers conscious love to the crystal or the clod. Whatever is once desired by the Creator must be always liable to desire, for it is the invitation of one who is not afflicted by the caprices of earthly love. It is as essential that God's tendency to love us and desire us should be infinite as that his power should be, or his skill, or his justice. When animated nature, struggling up through its various degrees of intelligence, reaches a point where God, not content with propagating all the changeless types of animals, or with developing one type from another, shows a desire to recreate, to develop freedom out of matter, to reform intelligence, to lift it up to accountability, to bring out its latent truths, to love and long for its obedience, Nature has reached the point of a rational and personal man, whom God will no more suffer to slip from his infinite expectation of owning, of having the whole soul of, sooner or later, than he will suffer the rose to slip from his sense of beauty, the planet from his sense of order. And to the man who turns away sorrowfully or defiantly, and makes the heart of his youth hard against the arrowy smile, the law of his structure will dispense as much pain, sooner or later, as will be salutary to break up his reserve. Can a finite being, by sinning,

ever make himself impenetrable to an infinite being? The thought is inconceivable. We cannot use ordinary language, if we think so: all words that express the relations of created things to creating power are turned adrift, without a purpose. For such a theory of the universe a new language must be invented; but it must be one that man cannot speak. For the breath of God in man gathers upon his lips in words of spontaneous reply to God's desire.

What is the whole of our life but an appeal which Heaven makes to us for our coöperation with its purpose? And what better way is there to discover what the purpose is, than to take notice of the appeals? Every being discovers his own object in life by taking heed to the solicitations which are made for his time, his gift, his influence, his physical or mental expenditure. Not by consulting bodies of divinity that pretend to explain God's objects in creating us, not by reading a class of books that are devoted to the narrow purpose of speaking well of God, making a catalogue of his attributes, or showing how Jesus manifested him, but by taking at first hand from God himself his orders, expressed to us as they are so explicitly in the next thing that we see must be done, whether we are charmed with the thing or not. But, in depending upon our coöperation, heaven has not forgotten to make something in its appeals to us attractive: if not the thing itself, then the sense of sacrificing attractiveness for its service; the very dislike to do the thing has its attractions to a human soul. Its sorrowful turning away is an intimation to itself that something truly noble just looked at it in passing.

We have not a season from youth to age that is not filled with these expressive hints that we belong to a spiritual order of creatures, and must do a spiritual work. But in youth, especially, when the immature mind is clamorous to find its proper growth in its appropriate employment, the soul is besieged as though it were the door at which some largess was dispensing: there is the turmoil and pressure of a crowd; there is annoyance, uncertainty of claim. It is the greatness of the Infinite before these avenues that communicate with human life. Conditions of the body, temperaments, the disfavor of circumstances, sometimes increase the embarrassment to the point of mental distress, and worry of the conscience. But it is not long before the prominent suitor emerges from the crowd, and, pressing a claim that is well founded in our own nature, urges upon us our own adaptation, fixing us with a glance of personal love. Sometimes the soul finds its kindred purpose without hesitation, or a moment of internal pain, as in water face answers to face, and the work of life is cheerfully begun. No man is ever left so poor in opportunities of serving God that he does not see the face of some truth as it passes by his place of business and invites him out upon God's highway. It is some occasion for private, family devotedness, some unpopular cause, some scouted aspect of divine things, some call of the country and of humanity,—it is sincerity and personal surrender in some direction. It says, Take up that sword—lift up that cross—wield that pen—feed that mouth—close that wound—bind up that broken heart—pour that love out of the window—

let that uncomfortable message through the door; behold, I stand and knock; the sound is harsh, but open, and see my handsome face, and bid me in with joy!

What claim have we to be selected by Truth? It is because it sees something in us that is akin to itself. It is the Infinite perceiving itself in the mirror of human intelligence. What a spotless depth youth is to receive the reflection of that face! Before a single gale of passion roughens and huddles all the features. Before egotism begins to look for its own face there, and is discontented at the intrusion of another and a mightier countenance that must and will look also, having no other surface upon which it can be seen. We are called because we can listen and comprehend the voice: we hear it as a straying child hears the mother's voice, that goes round through the bewilderment, groping and searching for the ears so well attuned by nature to thrill at the dear summons of deliverance. When your nearest of kin comes calling, you fling the closed casement open, and lean out with answering smile: and if fortunate vines cluster and blossom round your life, you break off the rose and throw it down, the gage of your fine challenge, then descend to meet it and redeem your pledge. Noble and uplifting moments of life, when imperishable love solicits you, and some truth or duty within you breaks through all constraints and rushes into God's open day to claim affinity with truth! Then is the moment to return love and to be loved, and to build the soul's life upon happiness for ever.

How large a part of human pathos turns upon the

common circumstance that the soul will not recognize its next of kin, rejects it, under the dominion of some prepossession, prefers some passing fancy, shrinks from the entire confidence and devotedness that it will have before it wholly loves! This is history's continual replacing upon the stage of old tragedies, by new ones drawn from the same old theme. To be a lost leader is bad: to desert a cause once embraced, how full of sorrow! But to refuse when you are tempted by Truth, and to turn away sorrowfully, perhaps even coweringly, when some majestic look falls on you, to deny your own heart to the excellence of thinking or doing that pleads with it, and seeks to swallow up all its hesitation in avowal and plighted faith and blissful surrender, to be startled at the sight of your soul's own blood mantling in the face of your soul's own truth that was yours from the foundation of the world, yours by divine fore-ordination, to be not brave enough even to try to bid your own independence, your own life's heroism welcome: afraid of it, and running to shelter, into a neighbor's tenement, into the arms of old opinions, into the comfortableness of old routines, glad to get out of the sky into a frame-house, — surely, there is sadness in this, and the scenes of your tragedy, though no man is spectator, and no pen records them, are burnt into your soul by the stamp of your sorrow, and may there be read at any time by God.

And how different this tragedy is from that which the sons of God perform at the bidding of earnest expectation! The whole creation groans and travails with that: but the pain in it is that kind which belongs to the waiting for some manifestation, not the kind which

agonizes in dread of manifestation, in abject dislike of the tears which Truth must shed. As different as the tragedies of cowards are from the tragedies of brave men; as different as the sneaking pallor of murder is from the blush of battle. There is a moment in the career of every person when the choice is clearly given to him between the pain which kills and the pain which saves: he knows, once at least, that something loves him, and he can choose between the trial of following true love and the catastrophe of deserting it. Every boy must come to this, rude, indifferent, coarse-grained as he may seem to be, fit only for giving and receiving blows of fate: the handsome face of some occasion will transfix him. Every girl must come to this, however fleeting, shallow, and trivial her ways of life may be, herself prepossessed with unsubstantial motives, beset with vanities, launching her hours, as one lets bubbles from a pipe, to mark the frail iris that the sun will paint for her ere they flatten. Manly, well-proportioned, exacting, thrilling Duty will claim her heart at last; some face of Truth will point to its crown of thorns and woo her pity; some bold eye, like a heaven full of daylight, will challenge her gaze till it droops in thankful acquiescence. There is the God within us, and the God without: they twain must become one flesh. Father and mother of the old life must be continually deserted for the marriages of the soul.

How can we ever be really sure that something divine invites us? It is important to consider if there be any way of distinguishing between one's conceit, one's prejudice, one's audacity, and a plain call to believe a

thing, to act a thing ; between one's timidity and a clear hint to avoid a thing. Our preferences for our own notions and habits may easily appear to us plain calls. Our conservative tendency to hold on to a mode of life, a style of faith, a way of thinking, is one of the most common things which deceive us. We suppose we are doing God's will when we do what we have done before. The duty which unsettles that, cannot be of God, we think. Nothing is easier than to mistake our dread of society, our personal implication with dear friends and relatives, for a spiritual call to remain where we are, to think the old thoughts, to repeat the old phraseology of opinions into which we have grown comfortably, as into coats, to keep up the ordinary round that we have so often proved to be excellent and pleasant. And what disguises selfish calculation will borrow, so that our hankering for something will appear like a loving for something, particularly when all the grosser part of our nature is suborned to give false testimony on this point ; so that, for instance, our desire for admiration may appear like a real love for following something that gets this admiration, and things, good in themselves, may be bought by us, whole slave-coffles of them, and driven afield to raise for us consideration. How can the divine be distinguished from the common and unclean !

Every person is provided with his own test of this thing ; he can go into the gold-bearing regions of God and make his own assay. Can a miner go to Colorado and at once separate the ore from slag and refuse, and cannot the soul discern and reject the low surroundings of Truth ? Are the perishable senses more

trustworthy than the immortal conscience? Has Truth been made lovable by us, and are we yet at a loss to know what truth to love? The soul settles this matter for itself, sometimes with joy, sometimes with sorrow: both feelings testify that a competent judge is at hand.

And see how simple the way is. Whatever looks on us and loves us does so by virtue of the kindred quality in ourselves. Then we may know that it is genuine by the way it pleads to be brought to our notice. And it is a pleading that offers disquiet rather than content, and invites us into a transitional state, where we often experience conflicting emotions, because it is a transforming, regenerating love. It does not know what placidity is. It is a very exacting love, and wails unless it can have a whole, unmortgaged heart. It solicits us with the conscious pride of equality. Your dog may be fed with bones beneath your table; if you had a slave he might give you pleasure by his cringing: any common gratification may take the toll you throw; but the sweet sternness of your wife overpowers you to give the freedom of your person into the keeping of a perfect freedom. We may know when it is the Truth that is waiting for us by the feeling of high kinship, and we see how different it is from a feeling of low acquaintanceship. The soul knows it in a breath. It can never mistake the irresistible attraction which comes to sweep our greater will away in spite of our petty wills; for it is an invitation to the soul to fall into line with all the other worlds of God, and to sing the song of the morning stars in that great procession.

We may distinguish reluctance to follow Truth from a dread lest we follow Error, in this, that the Truth draws while it seems to repel. The repulsion is only our own tardiness. The Truth was punctual: we were not quite up to time. If the thing that loves us be truly lovable, it penetrates our first alarms with a feeling of sublimity, such as arises in the presence of danger, and that which is excited by heroism putting itself in peril to serve some great purpose of rescue. There is always an element that tries the nerves, that takes away the breath, that bids the pulse bound wildly as the new task is assumed. This enlarges the whole organization; more blood is made, more morbid muscle is repaired; the gifts of the soul repay all its first tremors by expansion, and at last it serenely weds the Truth that seemed to court so roughly. It was only seeming: we were taken by surprise, we were not expecting to be so frankly summoned. And yet it is our own flesh and blood that opens this wooing with the words that startle: Let the dead bury the dead: leave all and follow me — the old house, the old lands, the old estate — I settle a hundred fold portion upon your fidelity.

We may know that it is a truth which has got audience of us, and not our own conceits and prejudices, when it dislodges us and sends us elsewhere, when we are detailed for duties, when our easy quarters are beaten up, and we have to rough it in the field, when we are selected for the forlorn hope, when we are ordered to the front. Pride of opinion, love of comfort, a desire to keep on good terms with our circle, these are never haunted with the enterprise

to colonize a virgin soil and plant a flag there. But Truth, in every one of her stages, longs to leave some things behind: the truth of morals inspires us to abandon the old habitat of our vices, the truth of religion drags us out of our doctrinal burrows to explore, to take possession. God cannot be exhausted. He has ever new things for new spirits, who become the most religious when they submit to this onward tendency, and break away in pursuit of the infinite mystery. It hails us in the van. Have you never heard its voice, paying men that most exquisite of flatteries, by asking for their hearts? We cannot conceal our satisfaction, but break into smiles and adoring gestures, and bend towards that invitation as the Earth towards its Sun.

XI.

CONSTANCY TO AN IDEAL.

THE Ideal is not a phrase in high repute among practical people, who suspect it of excusing some immediate incapacity, like that which would recommend clouds to the selectmen for a new style of pavement, or a balloon's aimless whirling instead of some direct and planted way of locomotion. There may be an upper westward current; but in the mean time the rail gets over the ground by all the points of the compass. The Ideal will possibly carry a person off by some aërial route to Paris; but if he would return to Boston he must alight. This shrewdness is furthered, too, by the feeling that the phrase is chiefly the property of poets, who are exercised only in expression, and cannot be counted on for work. The influence which imaginative expression exerts upon a people is undervalued because it does not enrich the instant, but passes into the temperament by slow absorption, and appears at length in quality. Men cannot wait for that. There is work on hand that is to be done with what quality exists, or not at all. A man of business cannot see that the poem which he read over night affected, unless to perturb; his next day's operations. He will

do better with his leisure next time by getting well posted from the commercial columns. He rises more buoyantly upon stocks: the pathos that wrings his heart is when they fall, and his streamers are no longer gaily afloat. The expression of music and art serves him only for enjoyment, and he has this advantage over the idealist that nobody can calculate the subtle orbit of influence, nor show how the song and symphony make blood. It is only by accident if one or two men in a generation have their heart or stomach so exposed that the physicians can observe its function. But if every brain were unroofed, there is no Asmodeus skilled to detect tones and colors jostling its atoms into more spiritual companionship. One must be a part of the violin's grain to know how the vibrations of the strings record themselves in the dead wood of the instrument: not dead, indeed, if it is capable of assimilating rhythm.

But there are two kinds of the Ideal: one tends toward expression, the other animates all kinds of labor, and secures results. When a practical man says that he can do without the Ideal, he does not understand his own business. When a prosaic moralist says the same, and takes a contract to reform or to establish, he throws up the material that he must work in. It is intangible, but has a pressure of so many pounds to the inch, and he stands drenched in it while he pretends he does not breathe.

There is some ideal stimulus in every kind of work, none the less definite because the worker appears to be unconscious of it. A gang of men with sledgehammers go fastening ties westward toward a Golden

Gate. There is expectation in every stroke: not a man of them but proposes to arrive somewhere by that track on which he is hammering. Family bread, affection, independence, enlargement: these invisible yearnings give the gold-glimmer to his Sacramento. He is an idealist while he is faithful to his work. And the country which hires his labor, and affects only to be wanting to reach the Pacific thereby, is stimulated by more than all the spices of the Orient. There is no such ideality on earth as that which compels a nation to expand all its powers of intelligence, and to reach eventually the Rights of Man.

Something is to be overcome, wherever the ideal road is travelled. The effort may be stamped with the coarsest realism; but the ideality is in the effort. We do not know the outlets of every thing that we perform, nor the subtle connection between our simplest acts and our loftiest attainments. It sometimes seems a great way from the body to the soul; but a very slight deed may bridge over the abyss of that ocular deception. The soul is waiting close at hand to receive the benefit of our least integrity. So that very ordinary things may be the essentials to secure our spiritual advance: begrimed and sturdy engineers who rapidly pontoon for us a formidable-looking current, and let us transport our whole splendid equipment to the opposite shore. The Indian knows that a buffalo trail will take him surest to water. The American condescends to follow the Indian, and his cities rise opposite to ferries and at the confluences of streams. Then at length the buffalo pilots thither the silent steps of Religion and Liberty.

When Frederick the Great said he always noticed that Providence favored the heaviest battalion, he only stated in a sarcasm what God in history states religiously: that he is on the side of valor, foresight, self-control, wheresoever and on whatsoever objects these great qualities of an overcoming man are exercised. God, having no human pride, does not regard the nature of the object, but its intrinsic difficulties and its drift towards some beauty. An ideal object is one, however material, that gives the world a whole-souled man. And it is on this principle that natural forces seem to have selected their men and nations through the whole of history. It is the forecasting that moulds and reconstructs a raw popular material, till it is able to occupy, or to create, some important position, to assert a truth, to breast a flood of tyranny, to be caught in some way by the drift and amplitude of the divine order. If people have settled in spots towards which the streams of the past converge in order to find the outlet of civil and religious liberty, or if their ethical quality slowly selects spots that invite either the friendship or hostility of reigning ideas, and suggest rude engineering to arrange a battle-field, they are certain to be subjected to the training which shall best prepare them for their great effort. This training consists in overcoming something, no matter how physical, or how remote in character from the future issue.

I know of nothing, for example, more striking, than the way in which the Dutch people were prepared to maintain liberty of thought and worship. A poor Frisian race was selected, and kept for centuries up to its knees in the marshes through which

the Rhine emptied and lost itself. Here it lived in continual conflict with the Northern Ocean, forced literally to hold the tide at arm's length, while a few acres of dry land might yield a scanty subsistence. Here circumstance kept them, half submerged, till, instead of obeying a natural impulse to emigrate to solid and more congenial land, they acquired a liking for their amphibious position. The struggle piqued them into staying and seeing it out. For centuries they appeared to be doing nothing but building and repairing dykes, when really they were constructing a national will and persistency which was a dyke for tyranny to lash in vain. By keeping out the water they trained themselves to keep out the more insidious tide of bigotry and spiritual death. What a homely and inglorious school for a great Republic, that taught her how to watch patiently by tending dykes and ditches, how to close a breach against ruin by standing with succor in the mid-tide when the sea-wall crumbled, how to convert almost continual defeat into victory, by keeping hold of a drowned position, cultivating acres that had just been drenched with salt, flowing back again upon depopulated districts and holding the old line against the sea! All these stubborn traits appeared afterward clothed in noble forms of moral and mental life: still there was the old breakwater running through the national temper, and the Will of the people was like one of the ancestral Frisians, who could stand in a flood all day and not be chilled. The wisdom was vindicated which compelled them first to make a soil for ideal liberty to flourish in. And as nations are prepared

for great destinies, so are men: the constitution must catch free and vigorous movements in some mode of life fatal to indolence and vulgarity, the Will must be roused and learn how to handle the helm, no matter how rude the objects of the voyage are.

The law upon which this principle rests is a very simple one. As you would never suspect the force of water till it breaks against something, so human volition and freedom never exist except in the act of overcoming. Before that moment they only remain as a condition of the mind which may be roused to action. What a difference between the sluggish level of a summer sea, with no more strength and depth, apparently, than to run up and lap the land, and the same surface when it seems to roll with a succession of deliberate, overpowering purposes, betraying what a depth it has to plough upon and yet not plough to the bottom, as it lifts and towers against some barrier put there to express its might! In the act of striking, the graceful and voluptuous roll is changed to power. Without an obstacle for the growing billow to tend towards, it would pass unestimated across the surface. After once seeing how it can strike and shatter, the free wave has more weight to the observer. So a man has a great, silent, heaving element of volition, but it never develops energy till it touches something: then, if it singles out an obstacle to overcome, it carries the whole nature along against it. For the Will is the directing impulse of all the gifts and tendencies a man possesses; every sweep of it is backed by the whole deep behind: when it strikes, action and reaction are developed, the whole nature is thrown into a healthy

ferment, and every power is enlisted to make the overcoming power available. A man cannot come out of a real conflict without feeling an exhilaration of his whole mind and heart. He leaps all over, like a sea full of billows. He has asserted his individuality, and has become a man among men. So the thrill of exercise benefits the blood as well as the muscles, and the nerves as well as the blood. And, above all, the consciousness of one victory surprises all the powers into making attempts of their own to taste the same feeling of success.

There is no real difference in all the labor which is performed between the mowing of the house-drudge up to the combining, choring evolutions of the poet's brain. Constancy, everywhere the same, like the one nutritious principle in various kinds of food, is the element which makes all work substantially the same. And, like food itself, how work appears in an infinity of forms, on different surfaces, on different soils in the same surface, growing up into diverse colors. And yet in all the principle is identical. As by chemistry we resolve every edible thing, from the root painfully torn up by the savage to the wheat that falls gracefully before the reaper, and the grape that is plucked with songs, into the same elements of nourishment suited to the unvarying economy of the human frame: so we may suppose that all the labor of human hands and brains, from the stitching of the overworked and drooping seamstress up to the slow threading of the logician's thought, from the monotonous crack of the teamster's whip up to the telling succession of the orator's great periods, from the

ends of the fingers to the heads of the nerves, is resolved by the spiritual chemistry of the Creator into simplicity and elemental identity.

The poets and men of expression have not, then, monopolized the Ideal. We must be poetical enough to detect it in the moral uses of the ordinary life we lead, that is so pathetic with the struggles of constancy against physical and mental circumstances. No matter how sensitive a young person's heart may be, like a bare nerve in the weather, flattered by the soft touch of music and colors, pared into gracious action by the chisel that builds the statue's symmetry, twitched by the finger of tragedy till the fount of tears is opened, — his ideal life does not begin till he turns away from these to take up his own instrument of work, to chip a conscience out of school-keeping, type-setting, engineering, cooking and house-work, to quarry some vital activity of a free people. Because he himself is to become a poem, fairer than any that was ever written, by overcoming indolence and a bad disposition, in favor of some immediate exigency. That is the story of his siege of Troy, his wandering of Ulysses, his Paradise regained. The ideal of his constancy is the moral sense which some personal deficiency or poverty inflames, till it becomes his pillar of fire in the wilderness. It does not shape him so much to remember the *Odyssey*, as it does to tie himself to his own mast and sail past the Sirens; or to go through *Circe's* den not only unsullied but a liberator of his comrades. When we see the course of Nature breeding in such schools its human genius, we may know how closely allied are conscience and superior talents.

Underneath the slow grinding suddenly a facet flashes. It is true you may grind at a sea-shore pebble till nothing comes of it but sand, but before you begin to grind all stones appear of similar texture. The real ideality is hid in this persevering against the most humiliating and prosaic conditions, such as the Creator maintained through chaos and his scarcely less chaotic creatures of the early epochs. A million or two years of coarse persistency vanquish matter, and Shakspeare supplants the Saurian. Why should he not in every man and woman? for conscience can become Shakspearian underneath a hod of mortar that mounts round by round to top the house. Young people must learn that their creative and inspiring impulse is not derived from high Art, but from accommodation to low requirements in a high vein to make them serve, to extort from them such exquisite tones as the Russian did out of his bits of wood cut from different trees, till he converted the forest into a harmonicon; and that other obscure inventor, who coaxed a heap of various stones to yield up its separate notes, and to fall into place in perfect octaves.

All the manifoldness of modern labor appears, to the first superficial judgment, to be only setting the rich rim of earth with the jewels of cities, embossing it with the traits of human enterprise, and shaking out the white sails of intercourse on every water, that man's dexterity may pass from hand to hand, to equalize comfort and success. But these things are the dead Scripture of a divine Ideal; they have no meaning until we perceive that human work is a means of human ennoblement, and that all products thus pass

from hand to hand that *souls* may be equalized, and divine Providence cease to be a monopoly.

It sometimes appears doubtful if we really appreciate this question. When I see the vulgar ambition of men who strive to better their condition by using labor of some kind merely to break their way into stock-jobbing, note-shaving, cotton-broking; when the healthy farm is left for the dry and sultry pavement, where men's manhood goes up in steam and leaves their sub-soil barren; when it appears to be the object to do the minimum of work for the maximum of comfort, and to join a well-clothed mob that goes wild with speculating, jobbing, lobbying, contracting, living by the wits, — a doubt comes over my mind if the young men understand the name, America. This is the meaning of that word which the rhetorician and the demagogue admire: Whatsoever thy hands find to do, do it with all thy might! Not with thy meanness, nor with thy shiftiness, but with thy might, with thy whole soul, as the winds blow, as the sun shines, as the tide runs up a continent; with all the native elements of a free man, not with the adroitness of a juggler, to play tricks, and outwit everybody with such a superfluous appearance of sincerity. Find something to do, not something in the city to save the trouble of doing; find something that increases the values of the world, not something that merely plays with them a game of shuttlecock. To all this strenuous idleness which has demoralized our great cities, God repeats the ancient necessity: "Earn thy bread in the sweat of thy brow." We have a country while Liberty wears those glistening drops,

seeing that earth is too poor to match, out of all her crown jewels, the native tiara of a Republic. But whoever lives in such a way as to make labor seem degrading, which he cannot do without stealing the labor of other men, prepares to betray Liberty, for he has already parted with his own.

Why is it such a fatal thing when a country has men who throw discredit upon labor? Wherever a theory prevails that work is degrading, great mischief ensues: not because a false ambition withdraws needful hands from employments, for there are many kinds of work that demand diversities of gifts. If a man lays down one tool to take up another, he may still be faithful to the Commonwealth. And it is not because men work badly who work under the contempt of their fellows, although there is no labor so ill done as that which is so meanly requited. But some kind of necessity — hunger, the climate, or the whip — will compel men to work in spite of human scorn: and the work will correspond to the necessity. In degrading labor the mischief is done to mankind by degrading Providence: it is a practical infidelity to the idea that God is a Creator. See how it operates. Work runs through the universe: it is the condition of permanence and growth. Mankind is not retarded so much by inefficiency as by the arrogance that will not imitate God, for a certain per cent of inefficiency must always accompany so many births, being only another accident of malformation. But God, in prosecuting his divine schemes, allows for inefficiency but not for infidelity; not for the arrogance that forgets it has been born, not for the ignorance that calls it an honor

to do nothing. When one variety of work is thought degrading, all the other varieties become impaired. It is a revolt of the whole working organization against the order of the world. Intellect itself is betrayed when it is anxious to make it appear that no vulgar labors occupy it. It is trying to separate itself from the natural religion of mankind, and to pass off for something better than a laborer. What intellect God puts into the strokes of every day, as he thinks it not degrading to have his petroleum ready for the tap, his veins of coal and granite ready for the blaster's drill, his oak rimmed for keelsons with the hardness of a thousand years! He puts slag into his iron, quartz into his gold, wildness and peril into his nursling whales, and rejoices to provoke our honest labor. There is not a stroke made by pen or pickaxe that is not in answer to the mind of God. He holds the most precious things beyond our arm's length, — gems, gold, beauty; he worketh hitherto to make them, and we must work to win them, — diamonds in the river channel, pearls in the duskiness of Indian seas, liberty in every acre of the soil. How long His mind must brood before he can bring forests to lignite, and lignite to coal; before the element of carbon will bleach and whiten into the Koh-i-noor, before the soil of a Republic can be transmuted into the Rights of Man! This is all the industry of God, who knows that idleness is chaos, and an idle man the soul's disorganizer.

Wherever this tendency to undervalue labor exists, one service at least is performed, though no man may lift his finger, for it puts into a rough, symbolic shape the disease of reverie which infects smart people with

the notion that their gift of sensibility, their claim to attainment, or conceit of superiority, is a fine and rather exclusive performance in the interest of an ideal impulse. Some people, thus afflicted, break into verse, mistaking their mood for a touch of the divine imagination, inflate their thin fabric, and look down upon the flatness of the world. Thus crudity, hysteria, and verbal facility sail airily over solid continents of struggling merit, never to return. But plenty of friends distend this self-satisfaction with a belching flattery, so that continual relays of it float jauntily above the silence of faithful souls. These aërial contrivances bear easily the weight of their contrivers, and carry them into the endless circuit of the winds.

It is worth considering how both self-satisfaction and self-distrust damage our best ideas, and let down our constancy to them.

When Thorwaldsen had finished his remarkable statue of Christ, he was observed to be very sad; and to a friend who asked the reason, he said: "My genius is decaying." "How so?" "My statue of Christ is the first of all my works that has satisfied me. Hitherto my idea has always far outrun my execution. But if now I am satisfied, I know I shall never have a great idea again."

In the struggle for life and for moral promotion we arrive at certain points where our greatest danger threatens us. It is that of being content with arriving. Contests that result in our favor, combinations that humor us, moments when we baffle temperament and snatch a moral life, have a chance still left in favor of

evil: that, namely, of demoralizing us by a feeling of satisfaction. There was an old general who made a successful landing of his troops upon a hostile shore: his first act before advancing was to burn the ships that brought him. A falling back was then no longer to be thought of. That is the way we ought to treat our attainments: sacrifice them to the necessity of victory, otherwise they only become the opportunities for declining the contest that impends. And a contest is always waiting in the front. To whatever spot we travel we find that we have only reached a place for discovering a necessity for travelling again, or of losing the advantages already gained. If a man could really come up abreast of his ideal, he would be no better off than the circumnavigators who reach the point from which they started. For to have no longer an ideal to pursue is the same as having never set out. So, fortunately, the spiritual life is not a succession of little horizons, whose surmises and expectations only delude us around to the place where first we lifted anchor. We shall never see that insipid calm again, nor be fastened to its buoys.

We reach certain points of our spiritual development where the great danger threatens us of being too conscious that we have got so far, too content with it, less difficult to please than before, a little hurt by the obvious advantages we have gained. Hannibal overstaid his time after the battle of Cannae: his quartermasters, instead of getting ready rations for a march to Rome, were counting how many bushels of knight's rings had been stripped from the bodies of the slain; and the common soldiers lost their disci-

pline in months of high living. The best and most aspiring of people are apt to have their Plains of Capua, where they linger to make a luxury of their successes. Men who are in a condition to push on are the most demoralized by waiting. Soldiers say that the hardest trial, next to that of continually falling back, is a check given to their instinct that a prime advantage has put them in prime order for an immediate advance. Napoleon used to risk something on the strength of this instinctive confidence.

Some of our most noted reveries of satisfaction and distrust look their worst when they are unflinchingly translated into the vernacular. This is a task which men sometimes undertake for themselves. But it is the nature of reverie to resolve action and thinking into mere nebulous possibility, to recur thus to a condition that precedes the formative and deciding Word. It is well to precipitate into words some of these vague moods of the best people. Here is one of them: "How well I have done! I appear to have got over this fault; I have checkmated my obtrusive temperament: it is so long since I gave way to it — so many weeks or months since the last fit of spleen, ill-temper, impure thinking, grudge of other people, envy of wealth, beauty or goodness. I have had a whole year of high-minded feeling; it has been signalized by a good many hours which I will claim contained a consciousness of God. Yes, I have had some beautiful hours: stop, my soul, let us remember them, and recall together the dates and circumstances. I feel myself sinking into a delicious recurrence of past excellence: what summer afternoon ever brought

me such repose, or lulled the senses and the mind into such harmony. It is midsummer's escape from elemental rages. "Now, if ever, are perfect days." Satisfied memory broods like a clear sky over my life. It puts an ear to my earth and tries if it be in tune.

Whenever a man is fascinated by the coast on which he has landed, it is fortunate for him if his conscience, without hesitation, cries, "Burn your ships!" The past is dead, all its actions have fallen off; they did duty, like leaves, for the season. If a man rakes his dead leaves together, it is a poor and thin compost that he makes. Pass on, the ground will soon be encumbered with them. Only boys like to hear them rustling, as they scud through on purpose to stir them up. Men are not made for such conceited reveries. Burn your ships, and let the impassable sea-line be your base. Plunge right into the ideal future, pursuing after pomp finer than any that you have overtaken, more sensibility for the divine presence, more knowledge of its laws and satisfaction with them, more fraternity for man, which is divinity for God, — more prodigality of all the gifts, sending them out right and left, cool and bold, to beat up the thickets and forage for truth.

Sometimes a mortified and discouraged person might recognize this plain speaking: "I can't get on. What force I have I bring to bear in the right direction, but the rails seem to be ice-coated, and I do not run. The bias towards a certain evil in me turns out to be strong enough to set my purpose of overcoming it at defiance. My ancestors have been too hard upon me: they lived first, and they lived fast.

The emotions indulged by them gave a warp to the brain, a generation at a time, — so small as never to excite an active jealousy, and to leave a slim balance of regrets, — till here I am, at the end of the process, with a disposition slowly deposited, like a coral reef, against whose concrete my will is weak as water. My forefathers only paid the interest as it accrued: but they left the debt to me. Here I am, imprisoned with my better ideal in an organization that is scored by the fret of all the years. Who wonders when rocks upon the coast begin to crumble? The first billow found them as smooth as itself: but time, though never in a hurry, is always patient, and feels after its crack to work upon. By and by the cliff stands waist-deep in its own debris, and every kind of greediness can climb up and paste its impudent placard upon it. So that now I am read of all men to mean sloth, gluttony, conceit, concupiscence. I stand for something in the line of self-indulgence, and my very face advertises what is to be had within."

This also may be recognized: "I cannot keep my temper under slights and provocations that other men shed; for I am boiled down and put up of several hundred considerable tempers, that were all well nourished in their day." May not this also find its counterpart: "What is my love for drink but the distillation of all the excellent liquor that my genial ancestors consumed in hospitable exigencies? They were slow to be affected: but I am at the end of the feast, and the drunkenness has just set in. The few years of my better tendencies have before them the task of undoing the work of two or three convivial

generations. How shall I set to work? It seems to me as if I am a trap for drink: I catch it by foreordination. I may as well carry out the unexpressed wishes of those whose legatee and sole executor I am."

And here is some person who has moments of awakening to the consciousness that his chief love is avarice. But he comes of a money-making family, and the bright round dollars have been the blood-disks that circulated to the heart and brain. Its proverb, earliest whispered into youthful ears, has been, "With all thy understanding get to getting." Is it remorse, is it consolation, or is it despair when the latest representative of these besotted exemplars might be thus expressed: "They took care of the pennies, and now the pounds are taking a sarcastic care of me. Their small profits are my great undoing. They fastened this rag-picker's wallet to my back, and told me that the world was my gutter for me to farm. I rake it, and the heavier and more intolerable grows my pack with the findings I jerk into it, the closer it clings around my chest and heart. Will death itself undo this accumulation of so many sordid minds? Will the soul, that has been bent double by the stooping of so many upon it from the past, shoot up to its true stature in the kingdom where the dollar does not reign? Welcome the hour that may put me where a man cannot take a dollar in exchange for a soul!"

We have all seen many persons who appear to us quite ruined. Perhaps there is a better judge of that; but, if it be true, the fact is not so revolting to us as the shock is which it gives to our natural preferences. The most deeply compromised person will prefer to

think that health has not become impossible for him ; he shares the instinct of nature which struggles desperately to make its growths shapely under gnarled conditions. A man clings to his share of a divine ideal of recuperation. No number of damaged structures can vote down our feeling that supreme Good aspires through man to become expressed and organized ; it shakes its signals of direction through the densest fog that we can exhale. We see the light discolored, but do not mistake it for darkness ; we observe whence it comes, and trust to its hints regarding our safety. On various principles of judgment preachers declare these men and those women to be abandoned. The epithet remands God back to chaos. The poet grants us a better glimpse of the hold on life that innocence possesses : —

“ I helped a man to die, some few weeks since,
Warped even from his go-cart to one end —
The living on princes’ smiles, reflected from
A mighty herd of favorites. No mean trick
He left untried ; and truly well-nigh wormed
All traces of God’s finger out of him.
Then died, grown old ; and just an hour before —
Having lain long with blank and soulless eyes —
He sate up suddenly, and with natural voice
Said, that in spite of thick air and closed doors
God told him it was June ; and he knew well,
Without such telling, hare-bells grew in June ;
And all that kings could ever give or take
Would not be precious as those blooms to him.”

Does not that precious cherishing snatch a new June from the collapse of the body, as a wrecker disentangles a still living babe from the last freezing strain of

a drowned mother? We can only bid our imagination frame, in the interest of the universe, at least a remonstrance against the destruction of the babe. For we must always presume that the faintest pulse is a possible chance for the heart to recover its full beat.

The world could transact nothing, and no race could ever develop its special felicity, if the ideal of goodness ever deserted its infelicitous men and women. But in many a case its continuing becomes tedious as a disease. Some of the most finely organized people, advantaged by good fathers and mothers who have been long dead, never forget that when a good past culminates in a man it is the consecrating of a temple that has been long building: still they fall into heart-broken moments of stupor, flatness, and inanity. The body has its dull days and misrepresents the weather to the spirit. A shadow makes no noise and is never announced: people picking flowers in the fields first know of it when the chill slides up to them. The body is often the cloud that comes eating up the landscape thus. But the mind also has its unhealthy tricks: the worst of which among fine people is the trick of letting society do all their living for them, the defect of holding no great purpose, of having nothing dependent upon self-sacrifice,—not one beggar of a cause to feed, not one breast of a challenging truth in which to flesh the sparkling sword of the ideal, that it may draw the blood of heaven, and rejoice to have its sparkle thus quenched. Then the noble soul declares its regrets, and does not scruple to paint deep its shame in melancholy upon the cheeks: so deep,

as if it would announce to all beholders, "It is too late: it is over with me—I am dying of too much purposeless purposing. Smattering of many tongues has spoiled my mother-tongue. I stammer with petty fluency. I have every thing to express and forty nothings to express it in: an active imagination clapped in the social stocks; an ardent soul, tethered to a peg, I eat all that's succulent within my range. Why do I not pull up the peg, and exchange my paddock for a landscape? Alas, it is too late: my trick of indolence, of squeamishness, my one selfish streak, whatever it may be, has been spared too long. The peg has taken root: so here I am, browsing around and looking through a rail-fence at the arrival and departure of the gods."

I say to all persons who have these regrets, born of vice, of self-indulgence, of physical despondency, or of baffled minds: I say to all whose cry declares that their ideal is not dead, Burn your ships! You have arrived, but you have run your ships upon the shore stern-foremost, and their radiant figure-heads are out to sea: look out lest tide and wind float you off from the firm feel of the land. This is your time, between two tides: over with your freight, and dare to meet, by this one resolute rejection of the past, all that you dread,—the whole palpable, solid difficulty that lies before you.

"Knowing ourselves, our world, our task so great,
Our time so brief, —'tis clear if we refuse
The means so limited, the tools so rude
To execute our purpose, life will fleet,
And we shall fade, and leave our task undone.

Rather, grow wise in time : what though our work
Be fashioned in despite of their ill-service,
Be crippled every way? 'Twere little praise
Did full resources wait on our good-will
At every turn."

What accusations of the corrupt society in Europe and America appeal to ears that are reluctant to believe the facts! Pamphlets are written to expose the trickery of gold and whiskey rings, of railroad combinations and rivalries, of the lobbying that goes on beneath historic panels where moments of abandonment to great ideas are recorded. Why do we suspect the truth with such difficulty, and can hardly tolerate the thought that man has lived so long, suffered so much, and let the blood of such hearts run away, to end in this knavery? Because we inherit a portion of the divine imagination, and no society was ever corrupt enough to extinguish it. When Alaric, in the year 408, appeared before Rome, and finally fixed the ransom of the city at 6,000 pounds of gold and 30,000 of silver, the patricians could not scrape enough together without melting down some of the statues of the gods: among others that of *Virtus*—Valor. That is generally melted away before an Alaric can get near enough to demand a ransom. When our old parties did it at the bidding of Slavery, it was called "effecting a Compromise." But Alaric appeared, and the wicked epoch fell strangling in its own blood. Sometimes God prefers to wear an uncouth and barbarian aspect rather than leave his Ideal to be gambled away by the sharpers of mankind. To a dissolute society he seems a Goth; but there is fresh blood in

those angry veins, and the light of eternity in those intolerable eyes. For mankind is expressly built to perpetuate God's pure intentions: we dream of them and aspire to reorganize them as fast as they give hints to us of our own hostility. Something greater than our greatest vice is shaken by a remembrance of divine origin, and wakes up in time to pull back the world from the brink. It threatens in the gestures of all persons who are only half liberated from our selfishness: in the workman and the needlewoman it protests and frames its piteous indictment; in the hands of the social critic its rapier plays dangerously before besotted eyes. Its dire necessity becomes so great that it overcomes at length the sexton and the parish-committee, elbows through all the sanctity, and rushes up the pulpit stairs, imploring and reproachful, as though its right had always been to have started thence to carry divine nature down among the people. No privilege is high enough to look down upon God's imagination: for having once conceived his own right mind, he devotes eternity to Virtue and the Rights of Man.

The great resource that man first derived from God, and all men from him and from each other ever since, is this good-will that prolongs the act of creation, and keeps us, in spite of failures, still capable to undertake morality. It survives the most eccentric periods of private or public life, and is so competent, indeed, that it seems to select the path to its object that lies through evil, as if conscious that there it would be tested and toughened, and driven to reality. It has a tendency to youthful reverie which is broken up

by some extravagance of behavior. Evil cannot be justified until God is detected sharpening upon it the sword of the spirit: or, shall I say, it is a rude and jangling sheath in which the sword blazes to itself and bides its time.

In our first unchartered moments, when we discover that Nature can be a bit of a spend-thrift, we have a companion better than all with whom we sport, and the inner sense reaches for its hand: as when a youth, blind-folded for a game, threads by some glimmer of seeing or of mere attraction, the whole romping scene, and pursues the beauty who one day shall be his. Heaven is never in despair; it has watched too many generations and profited by their prevailing goodness not to perceive that if dissoluteness be out of order, so is cynicism and a sceptical temper about ordinary people, if not more hostile to an ideal life. So the young persons launch their divine gifts upon a stream that is fretted with rapids near its head: some make the portages, others try the shoot,—the stream more tranquil always lies below. There are eddies that carry them into indulgences of social and material pleasure. The parents generally dissuade with a great deal of wise shaking of the head, as much as to say, “We’ve tried all that, and seen the folly of it.” It is an ideal instinct that prompts the children to reply, “Well, we would like to see the folly of it too.” How lucky it is that nobody can decant his old wine into the new bottles! So the youth gets his promotion from the nursery to school, to occupation, to love and marriage, to the successive disciplines; and his knowledge of

one period never makes him equal to the next one, which always has some surprising element that tests him on a new side. We have to go storming parallel after parallel. Up we run impetuously, with glad acclaim, and plant our colors; before the wind takes them, we perceive an inner line that we had not suspected. Headlong we go at that too, only to find that the busy antagonist has thrown up another; and that also has to be assailed. It is plot and counter-plot, mine and counter-mine: reality works, while the ideal catches a nap leaning upon its weapon, till, as we sink and the colors falter on the last breach, we find that death is only a resource and desperate ambush of a foe that is sullenly retreating; and to-morrow the Ideal, light-armed, with marching rations and the packs all left behind, will buoyantly pursue.

What a hint of personal immortality is this relative imperfection of our experiences! They suggest the absolute perfection which is the plan of every soul, like the crumbled scale or bone that taught the naturalist the structure, shape, and habits of an extinct fish, whose fossil even no man had ever seen. One day a fossil is found to justify, in the minutest particulars, the infallibility of the scientific imagination. Our partial experiences contain the history of souls not yet completed, and they are guarantees given to us directly by the divine imagination, the earnest of the spirit, that the whole plan must include all the time and opportunity needed to fill out the spiritual form. Eternity is in pledge to our successive disappointments. Every morning we go down to the edge of it like the fishermen of rock-bound coasts, and

put off upon it as they do, to fight for their little gains, and satisfy the hunger that is as prompt to return as the morning. All day we trawl and hunt by various devices for our shy sustenance ; and the fruitful infinite stretches all around us, so deep and coy that every thing is hidden, so deep that every thing is contained. Our day sinks into its storm or calm. Over it our day breaks with wants that never are appeased.

What do we care for the expense that this spendthrift, our good-will for God, subjects us to? If any thing is to be melted for a beautiful casting, men keep the flame up, and throw in all the fuel in the neighborhood. There is nothing too precious to go towards making a soul limpid and symmetrical. Bernard Palissy, at the end of twenty years spent in vain attempts to create a white enamel for his pottery, found nothing left but the house he lived in, and the fences around it. Not a billet of wood, for love or money, to keep up the furnace with. The palings were ripped down and thrown in,—the enamel had not melted. There was a crashing in the house : the children were in dismay ; the wife, assisted doubtless by such female friends as had dropped in to comfort her, became loud in her reproaches. Bernard was breaking up the tables and carrying them off, legs and bodies, to the all-consuming fire. Still, the enamel did not melt ! There was more crashing and hammering in the house : Bernard was tearing up the floors to use the planks as fire-wood. Frantic with despair the wife rushes off to raise the town against him. She was starved out by his pertinacity ; he was fed by his idea. And, while she was gone, the anxieties and

poverty of twenty years flowed in the clear coating that became the rage of kings and connoisseurs.

Throw every thing into the fire of the Ideal! — the incumbrances of society and pleasure, the frivolous amusements, the small talk and idling, the clique feelings and constraints, the conveniences that make our life a curse, the ornaments that dress us in a weight to crush us to the dust. Throw fruitless regrets and memories, and all the things we are most vain about, into the devouring flame. We are clay in the hands of the potter. Let all our rubbish melt to make it impervious to the weather, not subject to decay, much sought for by the King.

XII.

THE AMERICAN SOLDIER.

THE mid-winter of America, bringing her shortest days, lights them up with gleams from Forefathers'-Day and Christmas, those anniversaries of two births,—of a symbol of human capacity in an ethical form, and of a country that offers such capacity the largest opportunity it has yet enjoyed. The winter solstice never bred so richly before: the midsummers of other countries are less fertile. And every annual recurrence of these events renews the impression that, as the darkest hour is towards morning, and the shortest daylight is already turned sunward, so Truth is born in a lowly and obscure manner, in out-of-the-way places, under cheerless circumstances, amid the buffeting of men and weather, patient as a child, but tenacious as a martyr, a giant nursed upon the breast of womanly feebleness. It reminds one of Paul's paradox, "When I am weak then am I strong": and the most invigorating reflection of the season is, that a small and discouraging beginning is the best recommendation that a man or a principle can have. Human Capacity waits eighteen centuries before it engenders Human Rights, laid first in a manger, to be floated hitherward like a waif of time, and cast away upon a

rock : now a Republic has bled and worshipped in its name. We feel as if it were a dangerous thing for Truth to blossom into ease and splendor. Paul is more inspiring amid stripes, fasting, and imprisonment, fighting wild beasts, of body weak and insignificant, like a dull scabbard hiding a blade tempered at Damascus. Peter is more convincing while he works at his trade in Rome — that, namely, of tent-maker and apostle — than when he lives in the Vatican and calls himself a Pope. Peter made tents four years for us, and sent men to live in them for the sake of Truth. It was the shelter of faith and determination, put up and struck more easily than St. Peter's dome, which, like a bell-glass, defends show-plants from hardihood and usefulness. We welcomed the trials in which we lived, and were pleased to see our most precious thoughts abroad in that wild weather which God summoned from the elements, for it was like all Christian and Pilgrim beginnings. We would not have had success dawn too soon : victory brings pomp and self-laudation ; fortunately for mankind it brings also the necessity for a new adventure, a fresh exercise of plain and heroic dealing. When a man or a nation has done any thing, God seems to say : "What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? They that wear soft clothing are in king's houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea!"

We cannot apply to America the saying which grew out of a dislike to war : "Happy that nation whose

annals are tiresome." But that nation is certainly happy which does not forget its annals, if they have been written in the blood of its people.

How long it seems since the men of Lowell and Lynn hurried to Baltimore to illustrate a famous date in our history, and the men of Ohio and the West sent their stiff retort to rebel diplomacy, in the message that, for their part, they were continually prepared for the "further effusion of blood" if the Republic demanded it, and were not in the habit of surrendering much! The ploughshare, the shuttle, the lap-stone, the flail, were converted by the instinct of the men who handled them into the bayonets which have defended and prolonged their use in the interest of a peaceful freedom. Were it not too painful, memory might be freshened by reading the report of the condition of our prisoners at Andersonville, by treading again the wards of hospitals from east to west, following in the wake of rebel barbarity to pick up our desecrated dead, gleaning the smiles and noble glances of our wounded who lay content upon fields which their blood purchased. What a crucifix the common soldiers found and held up to the adoring gaze of a country, to convert it to manly and religious truths! The spirit of the Lord had sent them to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that were bruised.

How it has faded from our mind, too, that while our mechanics fought, their natural brethren of England, the Lancashire cotton-weavers, fought also with the awful enginery of patience: for they understood that though no cotton came through, yet liberty,

human rights, the true bread from heaven, were running the blockade daily, to bless them at last, and feed both mouth and mind. When their employers explained to them that the cause of their suffering was the American War, they answered, instead of getting up Confederate sympathy, "We don't mind suffering a bit, if we can only set the poor slaves free." The starving weaver saw through the war into a practical sympathy with his own class and into liberty for all. And surely if Jesus could have seen those poor women at a certain mill weep over and kiss, and sing before, the first bale of cotton that arrived there, he might have said: "These love me better than the women who ran after me in Judea, for these have taken up a cross: they have refused to weave their sorrows into a strand to put around the neck of slaves."

It was such a real epoch of a cross, that all the sects which pretend to exclusive property of that symbol forgot to quarrel about it, and ran together into fraternal worship at its foot. The soldier suggested to the country its chance to establish a national religion: and it is really true that for a time all specific notions were swept away.

Now that the people have gone back again to their churches, if there be one recollection capable to restrain the old dogmatic emphasis, and to soften the features of differences, it must be that the soldier's blood was an atonement for sin which liberal and orthodox must alike accept, while they delight to make the character of the men who shed it a part of their scheme of religion. The country is covered with its texts: they are the hillocks which you can still

count, though rain and weather have been gnawing at them. They define certain thoughts as sharply as ever: so that there is not a child's brain, that first woke into attention during those campaigns, that is not coördinated by the story. It ought to be his first lesson in theology, that manliness is the only sect, and faith in natural ideas of justice, of God, and human nature, the only body of divinity.

Just opposite my window rises the steeple of a meeting-house, and it stands out with great distinctness when the rising moon slips behind it and is lost to view. I see a special object, like a label or advertisement of certain commodities to be had within. But it is far more cheering when the moon emerges into the clear sky, and reflects to me the whole of the light which it gathers in one great gaze from that sun beyond my horizon. Then that and all other steeples retreat into indistinctness: no particular truth can be obtrusive in a heaven that is large enough for all the light that can be thrown upon our intelligence. How it travels from meridian to meridian, casting scutcheons of silver upon all those honorable graves, where lie the men who taught us that Character, emerging from all the accidents of birth and education, is American Religion, — faith in God, in Human Nature, and in the Moral Law.

Mr. Lincoln said at Gettysburg: "We here highly resolve that the dead shall not have died in vain; that the nation shall, under God, have a new birth of Freedom, and that government of the people, by the people and for the people shall not perish from the earth." But unless we embrace the religion which inspired

these dead men to illustrate more than discipline, more than valor and resolution, and which went ranking all creeds under one uniform, shoulder to shoulder, to level their steel against injustice in the front, and to move on its works incessantly, like a climate which persists and cannot be abolished, — the dead will have died in vain.

It is well to collect and preserve a few of the personal traits of the American soldier. They all seem to me to be bone and muscle of his personal religion. The soldiers of other nations are brave in the field, subtile and adroit in strategy, patient in hardships, competent to obey orders, vigilant at the outpost, cheerful in all weathers, ready for the blanket around the bivouac, or for the shroud of mist which folds them in death's sleep upon the field. But the American combination is peculiar: the soldier's elements are differently mixed in him, and dominated by a temperament that is as distinct from Europe's as our air is, which excites more nerves and furnishes less flesh for padding. The French soldier is more gay, and inventive of jests at scars; but there is a lightness in them which the east wind forbids us to imitate. A young Lyonnaise soldier wrote thus to his mother after the battle of Solferino: "My dear mother, — I am yet living, very living, and *bon vivant*. Only, I am not *complet*, like an omnibus when it rains. [*Complet* is the sign put out by the conductor to notify that the omnibus is full.] The regimental surgeon has just cut off my leg. I was accustomed to have it, and the separation has been severe. My sergeant-major, to console me, says that I shall now have a leg made

to put a stop to that. Rejoice, my dear mother, in your luck, for my wooden leg will keep me at home, your dear partner at *piquet*. Hold! there's a tear on the paper: it is not a tear of regret, but of gladness at the thought of embracing you."

This is the Gallic vein of lightness, only possible to the nation that at Fontenoy yielded precedence in firing to the English Guards, but in Algiers could smother hundreds of women and children at the command of Pelissier, and in the Crimea sent 50,000 loaves of bread daily to their English allies whose ovens were clumsily set up. Ever since Marshal Saxe said that battles were not gained with the hands but with the feet, they are the children who march, bantering Providence on a full or empty stomach, but requiring frequent rations of victory to sustain their temper. Their camp songs are always gay, but those of the Germans are pervaded with melancholy, and seem to be set to the distant mutter of cannon which retreat after strewing a field with fragments of love and domestic longing. For no blaze of battle that puts out the hearth-light is great enough to compensate a German. The French are still first among European nations—notwithstanding late events and imperial demoralization—in shiftiness to meet and overcome the contingencies of war: resource is on the spot, and ekes out the sudden failure of camp material, and bright repartee is wreaked upon the misfortune while it is repairing. But the American mechanic, reared in States where poverty has liberty to get abolished by all kinds of dexterity, and who picks up the nearest stick to whittle out of it the school, the church,

the daily table, can be matched nowhere on earth for absolute superiority to circumstance. Self-respect has enjoyed centuries of municipal training, and understands the advantage of working for a Commonwealth. All its talents are nourished by a moral feeling of indebtedness to the general prosperity which they are so eager to enhance. Other nations have traditions of system that encumber their attempts to adjust themselves with unexpected exigencies. But we are not hampered by an old chest of tools: if we cannot find one of them that is competent to make just the stroke, or sink the groove that we need, something is extemporized to solve the problem. Said Governor Andrew: "The men we offer, besides fighting, can do any other things for which there may be occasion, from digging clams up to making pianofortes."

But these volunteers carried into the field high thinking from their low living, and improvised with it more bridges across the desperate breaks where retreating treason had broken down the country's conscience than their hands ever repaired. The dislocated tracks of fidelity were tied to the soil again by men whose village thrift had not impoverished the soul.

It was the distinction of all the better class of volunteers, that they bore not only the brunt of fighting and the lassitude of defeat, but all the infirmity and scepticism of their comrades. And their moral power alone made them equal to it. Other men were as dexterous, as brave and enduring. The soldiers of other countries, who obey the system that recruits them and swallows up their individuality, know what the battle-

ardor means, can improvise a meal or a shelter, can transport equipments across swift currents, can rally round a flag at a drum-tap that interrupts their pangs of hunger and promises them the banquet of death. Cases of desertion are less numerous than they were with us, when the old home pulled the heart-strings, or defeat demoralized. Foreign regularity of discipline, and ubiquitous authority, preserve an army's solidarity at the expense of every personal preference. But our volunteers were substantial elements of the authority which they obeyed: and they took the field with something that no other soldier finds indispensable to his day's rations, — an independent moral sense, that elected every situation, preferred each drawback, deliberately proposed to see the business out, kept its own sovereign will in command. The best men were centres of conscience, planted like flags that have received oaths that they shall never touch the ground. The silent influence penetrated into every detail, and was the reënforcement that came up in time, wherever defeat and unfaithfulness threatened.

Count Gurowski, living at Washington, kept a diary that reflects every shift of the kaleidoscope made by variegated policy and the childish worry of circumstance. Its pages change from rage to pity at the imbecility of leaders and the heroic patience of the people. Defeats, mistakes, and absurdities, epauletted ignorance, red-tape, and solemn trifling, all at the expense of the "poor people," — the deluded, the fleeced and patient people. But they were seeing all the time as much as their critic did: they

saw one thing more,—namely, that to persevere with what they had was salvation, not to shriek and declaim about what they had not. Could foreign criticism generate great commanders for us? In the mean time the instinct of the soldier filled the gaps where incompetency fell and vanished. He stepped into the place, and showed his commission till a better one appeared. That was the miracle, that the greatness and the surprise to all the world. He secured to Nature time enough to grow her General, and fought it out on that line three years before he came.

In other lands, “the nerve of standing armies, that which alone makes them trust-worthy in war and harmless in peace, is an immovably true and valorous body of officers.” This advantage descended probably from the spirit of medieval chivalry, and is one of the military traditions of Europe. But the trust-worthiness which volunteered for us was not designated alone by shoulder-straps, it was a conspicuous distinction of the private. Our mechanic had no middle-ages nourishing his blood with sentiments of fidelity. The oldest venerable thing he could recall was, perhaps, his mother’s Bible. But whatever conscience went to make that book was shared by him, and he could count his ancestors by centuries.

I knew a boy not fifteen years old, but of a man’s stature, who tormented his parents to let him enlist. But his mother was reluctant. If I ever alluded to the war in a sermon, he would go home and say: “There, mother! Did you hear that? Can I stand that?” On rainy nights he would get out of his win-

dow and pace up and down before the house with an old musket as if on picket duty, and was delighted that he could not take cold. He was dull at school, and his tall head gathered the magisterial thunder-cloud, which discharged harmlessly through him, and protected the rest of the scholars.

One day he left the house, turning as he went, and simply saying, "Good morning, mother." He was gone to the war. Before this he had once enlisted at a neighboring camp, but his father brought him back. Now, under an assumed name, he found his way into the Second Massachusetts Cavalry, and all trace of him was lost for a long time. The mother's distress was at last relieved by news of him, and they began to correspond. He was perfectly happy, but found picket-duty rather more complicated than it was before the front-yard at home.

One day in the autumn he took cold and lay dangerously sick for several weeks. But recovering, he went into a skirmish beyond Vienna, was under fire, always behaved well, and was always supremely happy. One day he took a rebel lieutenant prisoner, and brought him into camp.

But in a few months, when the spring of 1864 opened, there came an ill-spelled and scarcely legible letter from a comrade, announcing at once his sickness and his death. He died at his post, for it was on picket-duty that the heavy mud drew off both his boots. He could not find them again in the darkness, but continued all the same to pace his round. He remained chilled and drenched till the guard was relieved, — then, one step to the hospital; then, answering to his

name as it went on the roster of that army which the Lord recruited from ours, he was ordered to the front upon another service.

When he left home he took with him nothing but a little Bible, a birthday present from his mother. I asked to have this Bible to read from at his funeral. On examining it I found that he had marked passages, which his sense appropriated, by putting flowers between the leaves. There were the dry Virginian flowers, which had transferred to the texts their sap and fragrance. The old verses bloomed again in the dew of his youth. Thus he reënforced Judea with America: "Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And the Lord said unto David, Go." This must have been selected before he went, and while he pondered his act. There was a flower against David's magnanimity, in 1 Sam. xxiv. 4, where David cut off Saul's skirt and left him free to go. And there was one against Ps. cv. 42, 43, 44: "For he remembered his holy promise, and Abraham his servant. And he brought forth his people with joy, and his chosen with gladness; and gave them the lands of the heathen: and they inherited the labor of the people," — which showed that he understood the President, and had his own thoughts on the Contraband question. And on carefully lifting up a rebel pansy, which stuck to Rev. xiii. 9, 10, as if to mark it, there were words made so apposite by his moral selection as almost to startle me: "If any man hath an ear to hear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity. He that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints." So, in the

fragrance of Scripture, which his own moral sense enhanced, we laid him away.

But it was the plain honesty of such action and suffering that extemporized a fresh page on which the divine in-being wrote its latest word. The boy shared the instinct that withstood, and at last destroyed, the moral border-stateism that was at first in favor. The volunteer answered to every roll-call, because he felt that the Republic held the list, pronounced his name, and asked his life or death, and was the conscience that gave him God's alternative of being on his side or against him. This dull, unburnished quality of duty staid in the camp and lighted its watch-fires long after the first enthusiasm, that filled our streets and fused all parties, had burnt down to the brands of doubt and dismay.

Perhaps the disadvantages of the early situation challenged this obscure moral power and drew it to the front. It is not only when a crowd sees treachery at work, but when it is expected also to stand still and watch the fumbings of incapacity, that resolution is gradually singled out and interferes. It is difficult now to recall the aid and comfort which treason borrowed from our own indifference and selfishness. One month after his first accession, President Lincoln said "he wished he could get time to attend to the Southern question; he thought he knew what was wanted, and believed he could do something toward quieting the rising discontent, but the office-seekers demanded all his time. 'I am like a man so busy in letting rooms in one end of his house, that he can't stop to put out the fire that is burning the other.'"

"Sitting here," he continued, "where all the avenues to public patronage seem to come together in a knot, it does appear to me that our people are fast approaching the point where it can be said that seven-eighths of them are trying to find out how to live at the expense of the other eighth."

And to his former law-partner, Mr. Herndon, he said: "If ever this free people, if this government itself, is ever utterly demoralized, it will come from this human wriggle and struggle for office, — that is, a way to live without work."

It will be remembered that Mr. Lincoln was at one time taken suddenly ill with the varioloid. After recovering, he remarked to a friend that there was some satisfaction in it, after all. It was the first time since he had been President that he had had any thing he could possibly give, that somebody did not want.

It puzzled him a good deal, at Washington, to know and to get at the root of this dread desire, this contagious disease of national robbery in the country's death-struggle. These servants of the people must have appeared as infamous as the menials who sack the house of a dying mistress, and greedily count the rings upon her shrunken finger. But what must be our reflection to perceive that the abominable greed has not been buried in the graves of half a million men, but stands upon them to scramble better into place. The Assistant Treasurer lately (1869) discharged one hundred and twenty-five clerks to economize the Treasury service; and out of the whole number there were one hundred that had not even a desk or a chair, or any business in the building. So many families in

Washington are decayed, that in order to prevent the members from being a tax in almshouses they are made a tax in the different official bureaus.

Thus the first campaign went on, with treason and ravin fastened to the throat of the country, incompetency and inexperience hugging every limb, unguarded expenditure and waste the impudent camp-followers of every regiment, and indefinite policy dampening every cartridge. Into this border-land the common soldier built his road: at one end of it a hearthstone that flickered more tremulously than ever with endeared life-breaths, at the other — he could not see the head-board at Andersonville and Salisbury at the other end, with the road thither blazed by the edge of battle. But he went on, after he had discovered the piteous direction of his route, and had missed so many comrades at the morning-call that he might wonder at his exemption. He heard the drum ahead: no fog of policy could stifle the crisp rolling that voiced the peremptoriness of his plain purpose. McClellan was held at telescopic range by the Quaker guns at Manassas, went into burrows at Yorktown, and at length drifted out of history by clinging to the planks of a Chicago platform, torn apart by a rail-splitter's hand. The drums grew fainter on his ear, with every stroke of the pickaxe and shovel that intrenched him beyond their vibrations. He, and all the other Napoleons of the epoch, went where there was no chance to count delay by the dropping of blood into hesitating palms, and no securing of policy by selling out Liberty's marble to be converted into grave stones. But the volunteer's well-fibred heart

still held together the ravelled line, and its pulse kept time with the drum-beat that grew more and more expressive, more intelligent with the practice of liberty.

We have forgotten the weeks and months of popular depression, when the public officials who were nearest to the seat of government, or who came back from a visit to Washington, where the heavy details of mistake and disaster told upon the temper, gave up the cause for lost. At periods when voluntariness was dying out of volunteers themselves, and depression or routine brought in moments of reaction, when the mismanagement of the politicians bred disgust, our fate lay in the hands of these men, who rallied instantly at the approach of genuine danger, and were disinfected of their doubts by the prospect of death. One thing alone, presumably enough to demoralize the firmest men, was the selfish persistence of the Northern papers in reporting, as fast as their eager and unscrupulous correspondents could gather the facts, the number of our troops, their positions, their probable movements, and the projects for a campaign. This was done that the streets of our cities might be filled with the cry of "Extras," fresh editions every hour, to build up great newspaper establishments out of the peril of thus imparting information to the South. The Southern officers used to say that they depended upon the North for cheap and accurate information — since our papers went into the rebel lines. They were worth to the South half the number of troops which they reported, and whose positions and movements they unmasked.

But the common soldier added the load of this selfishness to his knapsack, where it hung with the other errors and meannesses that found in war their opportunity. The weight, however, did not overtax him; and military writers will have to make a fresh estimate of the number of pounds which a soldier can carry into battle or upon a march. For although our determination buoyed up his heart, our delaying and distracted measures, our shoddy contracts, our superfluous expenditures, our bickering and political manœuvring, clung, like a ball and chain, to every step of his advance.

A day or two after the needless bloodshed of Ball's Bluff, where some one had evidently blundered by sending our men across the Potomac in a couple of leaky flat-boats, to form in the presence of an enemy that already exulted to see the advantage of fighting soldiers who had the river in their rear, and the two boats the only means for retreating, — a Massachusetts corporal, picket-guard at the river, seeing a rebel preparing to bathe from the opposite bank, shouted out to him, "Take your feet out of my river, or I'll shoot you!" When we doubted whether we should long own the Schuylkill and Hudson, the common soldier's geography never misgave him that all the streams, from the lakes to the Gulf, ran to transact the commerce of Liberty. The sense of ownership was as vivid after a defeat, and loss of ground, as when a great victory suddenly put us in possession of a State.

We used to mingle a good deal of exultation with the surprise we felt to see how easily a government,

without despotic measures, kept in the field armies greater than any which have waged the battles of the Old World, armed, victualled, clothed, recruited them, tended their sick and wounded, held the regimental deaths at a figure lower than is confessed by the medical statistics of England, France and Russia, moved the men from point to point rapidly and comfortably by such transport-service as was never before organized for military operations, delivered an army by express, set it down on time, with all its trains and baggage,—the whole field-service developed from that which corresponded to 10,000 men to that which cared for 750,000, the naval arm at the same time raised from 5,000 to 75,000, and vessels of novel and superior construction added, to the number of “55S steamers, with an aggregate tonnage of 408,000 tons against the original 26 steamers and 49,700 tons.” But the country which sprang from a positively supine and dismantled condition into that attitude of vigor owed it all to common talent and invention: and the men we undertook to transport were not machines. The intelligence we moved from point to point was a part of the motive-power. The individuality which flew apart to grumble and criticise—as Washington made complaint was the vice of the New-England men in his time—came together when the bugle cut it short, and every private was Uncle Sam’s head man. So that when we saw an armed man in the street, we only saw ourselves made emphatic: he was our deliberate purpose to have our rights respected. Our moral indignation was uniformed, equipped, and received rations in him. When his steel glittered in the

front, it was the flash of our eyes in search of treason : every cannon's flame was the tongue of our retort against the owners and despisers of men. If you would have measured the manly sincerity which those years of trial brought out of the bosom of the people, you would have had to sail with every steamer and to march with every corps, computing your steps by thousands of miles of sea and land, not to return till you had visited every picket-guard and signal station. Your journey would lie through the hearts of the men before you had inspected all the posts of Liberty. You should have been blood itself to travel through the new America. Depth of conviction, tenderness of feeling, trust in God, newness of life — that was your Country.

Hear a woman,* who was at the time superintendent of a hospital, describe how Burnside's men went into battle. As they passed the Hospital, "they marched at ease, laughing, singing, calling out now and then, 'Good-by, ladies, good-by!' One tall fellow dipped his tin cup in a little spring by the road-side and drank our healths in passing. '*Ave Cæsar*,'† said the Surgeon in charge, '*morituri te salutant*.' The sod was thick with violets, and bunches of them were stuck in many caps and coats. A soldier took the cluster from his cap-band and gave it to me. G. unfastened a little gilded horse-shoe from her chain and

* I quote from an admirable pamphlet, privately printed, entitled "Hospital Days."

† The cry of the Roman gladiators to the emperor, as they entered the arena: "Hail, Cæsar! those about to die salute thee!"

tied it, by the blue ribbon, in his coat. He lifted his cap: 'This will keep me safe in the next battle; I did not expect such good luck in Virginia.' One company was singing in parts, —

‘Rally round the Flag, boys,
Rally *once again!*’

So they passed, marching and singing, the bayonets disappearing at last southward in the spring sunshine, in the dust of the Leesburg pike.”

She also describes the passage of the Eighth N. Y. Heavy Artillery, in May, 1864, through Fredericksburg, where our troops had previously received a far different greeting. “In the headstall of Col. Peter Porter’s horse we fastened a knot of roses, and tossed roses and snow-balls in showers over the men. They were delighted. ‘*In Fredericksburg!*’ they said. ‘Oh, give me one: pray, give me one!’ — ‘I will carry it into the fight for you;’ and another, who was a lieutenant, cried, cheerily, ‘I will bring it back again.’

“Three days afterwards the ambulances came, and in them came some of the same men, shattered, dying, dead. We went out, but this time it was with pails of soup and milk-punch. One and another recognized us — all were cheery enough. ‘A different coming back, ma’am.’ — ‘No roses to-day?’ — And one said, pointing over his shoulder, ‘The Lieutenant is there on the stretcher, and he’s brought back the flowers as he promised.’ I went to the side, hoping to help a wounded man. The lieutenant lay dead, with a bunch of dead roses in the breast of his coat.”

The love of these rough men for roses blossomed even in their dreams. A German called G. to his bedside one morning to tell her his dream of her. "Last night I dreamed," he said, "that I was walking by myself in a great city and came to a bridge over a deep river. As I crossed the bridge it broke and I fell into the water, and was sinking, when you came and drew me to land. I was all dripping, and you took me to your own house and gave me a whole new suit of clothes, all dry and warm. Then you said, 'You may go into the garden and take a flower; take any flower you like.' So I took a rose; but as I was picking it I died and went to heaven. You called aloud to me, 'Don't drop the rose; take it with you and plant it in heaven for me.' So I went to heaven and planted it, and it grew and blossomed. And when the blossoms came I sent you down word, and you died and came to heaven, and found there all ready a rose-tree blooming for you."

A friend of mine pillaged Mrs. Scott's garden in Fredericksburg of its various flowers, and made the tour of the hospitals, to lay one upon each pillow of the wounded and dying. Those who were too far gone to speak sent up to him such gratitude from their eyes that they haunt him still with its precious quality. Others said feebly, "Move it nearer to me, let it touch my cheek — I want to feel it."

A nurse carries a bunch of the first lilacs to a very sick New-England soldier. "Now I've got something for you," I said, holding them behind me, "just like what grows in your front door-yard at home: guess!" "Lalocs," he whispered; and I laid them on his

folded hands. "Oh, Lalocs! How did you know that?" The lilacs outlived him.

"J. D. was brought in, far gone in fever, and speechless. In his pocket were found a red morocco Testament, and a poor little note-book, half soaked through with rain or swamp-damp, in which a few wandering pencil-notes were still legible, and this little couplet altered from an old song:—

"Not a sigh shall tell my story,
Silent death shall be my glory."

I will match that last line against the lines on whose simple feeling great poets have been floated into fame.

And what tender trustfulness breathes through these lines of an unknown man, S—— S——, a Massachusetts sergeant:—

"I lay me down to sleep,
With little thought or care,
Whether my waking find
Me here — or *There!*

A bowing, burdened head,
That only asks to rest,
Unquestioning, upon
A loving breast.

My good right hand forgets
Its cunning now —
To march the weary march
I know not how.

I am not eager, bold,
Nor strong — all that is past:
I am ready *Not To Do*
At last — at last!

My half-day's work is done,
And this is all my part:
I give a patient God
My patient heart,

And grasp his banner still,
Though all its blue be dim;
These stripes, no less than stars,
Lead after Him."

But we must not forget the prison relics. "What hospital nurse has not a bone-ring or trinket carved by her men in the wards or in prison?" One gave a white cross, saying: "I thought of putting your initials on it, but I could not bring myself to put even yours on any thing of that shape." But the country can bring itself to that. No form so appealing, with all its associations, as the cross, that seems to crave of us to chisel upon it the names of all those faithful and comforting nurses, who bore God's pity to the edge of the wrath of battle.

A soldier, just dying, felt the arms of his nurse around him, and he feebly whispered, "Underneath are the Everlasting Arms." Which did he mean, God, or the "everlasting womanly" that exalts a line of Goethe? *The one was the other.* And a nurse says that, as she ministered the last wants to a death-struck man, he rallied, looked up at her, and exclaimed with all the power he had left, "You are the God-blessedest woman I ever saw!" It was religion, like that of the Chevalier Bunsen, who was not too cultivated in theology to confess to his wife in the moment of death: "In thy face have I beheld the Eternal." Not only America, but God was with Woman in the

camp, and the illiterate soldier recognized the face of his redemption.

One of those mediating women said: "Let those who have one of the prison rings with two clasped hands, that mean, *True till Death*, keep it as a sacred relic. It is the prison sign. The fashion seemed to travel underground. I have had it from Texas, Atlanta, Columbia, Belle-Isle, Andersonville. It is as characteristic as the palm branch of the Catacombs."

This tender temper of flowers and of the cross belonged to our men who breasted Petersburg, walled Vicksburg in with fire, cast off at Atlanta and felt their way to the sea, took Mission Ridge at a single run through scorching flame, and, as one of them said, "saw God at Chattanooga." Flowers will never grow next spring as generous with red as they were with their blood, nor any so white as their honorable record.

But their humor matched their tenderness. Short rations, long delays, attacks repulsed, nothing quenched it. The humor was a kind of bunting run up by the spirit to apprise the neighborhood that it still lived, and to signal to the country that it was about to move on the enemy.

This elastic vein threw off the weight of the most threatening situations, and extemporized a climate in the worst of weather. At one time, before Vicksburg, our fortune touched its ebb: repeated assaults, drenching rains and failing commissariat, seemed to portend that the soldier's hand would be too feeble to turn the key of the Mississippi. It was just the time he selected to have his lightest heart and most outrageous humor. Nothing was too high to be its victim. A tall officer

trotting by on a little mule, beneath an enormous beaver, received the running fire of the whole line: "Come down out of that hat! I know you're there—I see your boots." The bad rations gave them exquisite advantage. One man, who had with great labor consumed a very hard biscuit, said, in reply to a question why he stood in the rain, "he had just eaten a biscuit, and wanted to see if he couldn't swell it."

And as the Confederate troops could not by rebelling secede from the solidarity of food, I must confess that they too found humor a substitute. For humor is a brace which tightens around all empty stomachs alike, till the laugh pretends to fill them. Gen. "Alleghany" Johnston, on the march to Bristow Station, in the fall of 1863, saw one of his men upon a persimmon tree. "What are you doing up there—why arn't you with your regiment?" "I am getting 'simmons, I am," replied the soldier. "Persimmons! They're not ripe yet—they're too bitter to eat." "Yes, but general," persisted the Confederate, "I am trying to draw my stomach up to suit the size of my rations. If it stays like it is now, I shall starve."

During the forlorn circumstances around Vicksburg, the time of the 17th Corps expired. Did it take the opportunity to escape? It was entitled to thirty days furlough if it would reënlist. It reënlisted to a man; and then played upon the enemy the capital bit of irony of taking the furlough in the State itself of Mississippi, which then belonged to the rebellion.

This gayety was not cynical and obdurate. When at Atlanta, letters arrived from wives and sisters who

were starving upon the neglected farms, and urged the men to return. They, knowing in many cases the destitution of their relatives, turned aside to read, that no eye might see what dropped from theirs: then slung the knapsack again to help Sherman conquer daily bread for 4,000,000 men.

The irrepressible humor spilled over into the sadness of hospital life, in spite of chaplains who apprized the men that death was waiting for them all, and who would occasionally prolong the subject till the usual afternoon funeral passed by, then bring it in neatly, — “Even now one of your comrades is being carried to the grave.”

Hilarity was certainly pardonable if possible. Once, at least, this vestry-vein was interrupted. A lady writes: “I was present at a meeting when a Defender rose and said he wished to confess to the brethren some particulars of a sinful life. There was once, in such a town, a godless youth, he said, and went on to paint his career: how at the age of twelve he smoked cigars and threw the Bible at his grandmother; at fourteen he played tenpins and went sailing on Sunday; at sixteen he ran away from home, &c., &c.; and when we expected the usual conclusion, ‘And I who address you to-night, my friends, am that forsaken lad,’ he surprised us by clapping his hand on the shoulder of an innocent, blushing youth in front of him, one of the steadiest boys in camp, and shouting his climax, ‘Which his name is Asy Allen, and here he sets!’”

The nurses were not backward to encourage the propriety of a jest. Mrs. Olnhausen, who added the

practice of surgery to her admirable qualities as a nurse, took off half a leg from an Irishman. He asked her, "Nurse, d'ye think any young girl would marry me now?" She told him she did not think he had quite so good a chance as if he had both legs off.

The pith of all these various characteristics of talent, temper, and moral feeling, was religious; and the true church of the country was detailed from all the meeting-houses, went into the wilderness and lived four years under tents, where each creed was allowed but its minimum of baggage, and the soul, reduced to marching rations, prophesied and prepared the way of the Lord.

"For my part," said Napoleon I., "it is not the mystery of the Incarnation which I discover in religion, but the mystery of Social Order, which connects with Heaven an idea of equality which prevents the rich from destroying the poor."

How well this sentiment of a great soldier was illustrated by the faith which lay hidden by the theology of Lieut.-Col. Wilder Dwight. He was mortally wounded at Antietam, and the chaplain visits him for the last time.*

* The brave and self-sacrificing Chaplain Quint, now of New Bedford, cannot be classed with the mortuary ministers who added a new terror to death. His visits were those of a friend who remembered the home-keeping mothers. Here is a different style, a specimen of Un-American religion: "Do you believe in a future state? Yes: well, ah, then you hope for better things, there; ah, yes: you will die happy—good morning, brother." How many convalescents did this tainted diet carry off? It is no less destructive at home, where its unwholesomeness is adroitly concealed by the bed-side rhetoric of the practitioners.

“After looking me earnestly in the face, ‘Chaplain,’ said he, ‘I cannot distinguish your features: what more you have to say to me, say now.’ (I had, of course, remembered his dying condition, and conversed accordingly.) I said, ‘Colonel, do you trust in God?’ He answered, with ready firmness and cheerfulness, ‘*I do.*’ ‘And in the Lord Jesus Christ, your Saviour?’ ‘*I do.*’ ‘Then,’ said I, ‘there is no *need* of saying more.’”

But what if he had said, “I do *not*!” Could such a technical denial expunge the record of a faithful man, or alarm the Divine Being who had been the life-breath of his whole devoted career? There is One who accepts the religion which obeys the orders for the day; its voice drowns the phrases of all our mental methods, so that the Infinite must be glad that it cannot overhear.

Doubtless his friendly chaplain would allege that the soldier's service was the result of his belief in a supernatural mediator, and that he could neither have denied its source nor derived it by any other method. If so, then there could have been no service in the army save upon condition of this preliminary belief. The campaigns are themselves the contradiction of this narrow view; for the unbelievers in an atoning sacrifice offered up themselves to be a ransom for many, with a heartiness that the stiffest churchmen never surpassed. Conscience and hardihood had reached the camp by no miraculous transportation, and bade the creeds stand aside to let Religion reach the front. Cowardice and shirking came too, and illustrated their independence of theology. It is

strange the theologians cannot see that the war has been a denial, of the most sublime and impressive kind, of the necessity of their supernatural schemes. This lesson of the divine impartiality stands by the side of emancipation to attract the regards of a grateful country, and to modify its future. Valor, and duty unto death, have passed into the consciousness of America; they survive there as perpetual witnesses against the wretched obtrusiveness of miracle and dogma.

But Chaplain Quint reached the heart of the matter, and doubtless of his own prevailing view in holding this last conversation, when he said: "Now what shall I say to your mother? He answered, with his whole face lighted up, 'My mother! Tell her *I do love my mother.*' (He emphasized every word.) 'Tell her *I do trust in God, I do trust in the Lord Jesus.*'"

His mother was the divine life that kindled that dying flame, and blew it across the sinking face to animate it into a last expression of immortal confidence. Such sons, if any, are born of an immaculate conception. It is the constantly repeated miracle of lives that are unselfishly devoted to the service of liberal and emancipating principles. He had previously said, "He was ready to die. As for the future, there was but one hope: no putting forward of one's own claims, but reliance on the merits of *Another.*" Thus spoke the traditionally nurtured intellect of one whose practical life illustrated *self-reliance* in the camp and on the field of battle, and the happiness of being well-born into an inheritance of cheerfulness, valor, and devotedness. He was a model to officer

and private, and in the blackest hour always prophesied that the dawn was breaking. One of his last requests was that the flag might be brought to him, and that the regimental band would play the "Star-Spangled Banner." As the strains ceased, he repeated the last line, and said fervently, "I hope that glorious old flag will wave over this whole country again. So may it be! *So shall it be!*" And so it will be, not through the effect of his technical religion, but through the conquering power of such personal faith and self-surrender. How the pet phrases of the different denominations crumble like moth-eaten paper away from the touch, as we turn to slake our thirst with the blood of his mortal wound and the tears of his mother!

What shall we exact as the ransom of the glorious bitterness of these recollections? That the flag shall wave over a completed freedom, such as the natural religion of the soldiers' hearts inspired them to expect. They must not be balked of their expectation. "Wherever the army goes," said Dwight, "there springs up emancipation." But that is a plant without a blossom, and promise of no fruit, till every prejudice has been drowned in the memory of soldiers' blood, that perfect equality and opportunity may range the poorest and most proscribed men in the country by the side of her true interests, and we all step together, over the graves of our heroes, to the strains of moral union, to take possession of that future when not one rebel shall be left to think meanly of our dead.

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